University of Alberta

A TRAVELER'S TALE: THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDY IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

by

Keun-Ho Lee

©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Secondary Education

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 2005

Library and Archives Canada

Published Heritage Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et Archives Canada

Direction du Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

0-494-08262-3

Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN:
Our file *Notre reference*
ISBN:

NOTICE:
The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:
L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

Abstract

It is generally agreed that language is important. And yet, when we stay in our native tongue, the system of language or the particular language we speak is rarely at the centre of day-to-day experience. But this is different for foreign students. The experience of having to use a foreign language as the medium of study may be the cause of a variety of difficulties and agonies. As well, such experience may teach the student more valuable lessons and lead to personal growth beyond what learned in the subject of study.

The main question of this study is, "What is it like to study in a foreign language? And what is the pedagogical significance of understanding the lived meanings associated with such experience?" In order to explore some of the possible existential meanings embedded in the experience of studying in a foreign language, this dissertation adopts a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology which is characterized by a resolute commitment to thinking and rethinking about the phenomenon being investigated. This study is also trying to think reflexively and thoughtfully about the experience of studying in a foreign language through the practice of writing and rewriting this text.

In this inquiry, foreign graduate students' lifeworld experiences are brought into the reflective space where the difficulty, uncertainty, and ambiguity of living and studying in a foreign language can be explored. In a way, what the exploration shows is not so promising and is filled with a great deal of frustration and utter confusion on the part of

foreign students. However, even those frustrations and pains may help us understand more deeply their lifeworld, and help us gain more pedagogical confidence in dealing with the problems that they might have—although such pedagogical confidence does not always clearly give us a list of what to do and not to do. Although the study makes no claim to empirical generalization, it aims to provide pedagogical insights into the lives and experiences of others. It may be especially worthwhile to foreign students and their advisers, by bringing forth a more sensitive intersubjective understanding of such possible experiences.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those who helped me complete this study:

Dr. Max van Manen for his constant encouragement and valuable advices. I will always cherish what he has taught me; how to become a thoughtful person.

Drs. Terry Carson and George Richardson for their warm and kind guidance.

Drs. Jim Parsons and Anna Kirova for their constructive comments and suggestions.

Dr. Margaret Hunsberger for her insightful questions.

All the staff of the Department of Secondary Education for their genuine support.

All my colleagues in the Faculty of Education, especially international students, for sharing with me their valuable time and insights.

My previous teachers, Drs. Jong-sam Park and Young-hyun Seo for their heartwarming encouragement.

My parents, Chong-kwan Lee and Young-seong Kwon, and my wife's parents, Hong-young Kim and Byeong-yeon Song, for their endless affection and support.

My wife, Hyo-jeong for her bottomless love.

My children, Hyun-ji and Hyun-bin for being my precious little girls.

I dedicate this dissertation to all the people listed above.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: PREPARING FOR TRAVEL 1

Living and Studying in a Foreign Language 1

Perceptive Changes of Reality 8

The Research Question 11

Curricular Context of the Study 16

Significance of the Study 20

CHAPTER 2: PHENOMENOLOGY AS A METHODOLOGY: A MODE OF TRANSPORTATION 22

Hermeneutic Phenomenology 22

Reduction 26

The Vocative 29

Methods and Procedures 31

Using the Personal Experience as a Starting Point 31

Obtaining Experiential Descriptions From Others 32

Making Use of Professional Authors' Texts 34

Consulting Phenomenological Literature 35

A Travel Metaphor: The Vessel of the Study 36

Outline of the Study 40

CHAPTER 3: LANGUAGE, HOME AND ABROAD: THE ROADMAP OF THE TRAVEL 42

Language and Human Being 42

Alternative Views of Language 48

Language and Thinking 56

Home and Abroad 59

CHAPTER 4: LIVED EXPERIENCE OF STUDY ABROAD IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: TRAVEL THROUGH THE MAPPED REGION 62

Lived Experience of Place 62

Not Belonging Here 63
Becoming an Outsider 67
Being on the Margin 69
Lived Experience of Time 72
The Unacceptable Present 74
The Fossilized Past 76
The Future Without Guarantee 79
Lived Experience of Body 81
Ceaseless Tension 82
Lost Spontaneity of Response 85
I Am Nobody; I Have No-Body 89
Lived Experience of Self and Others 91
Deprived Sense of Self or Self-Discovery? 93
Being a Foreigner 95
Being a Child Again 97
Lost Sense of Humor 99
Becoming a Serious Person 102

CHAPTER 5: LIVED EXPERIENCE OF STUDY ABROAD IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: REVISITING 105

Lost in Translation 105
Being and Becoming 108
Dialectic Between Home and Abroad, Mother Tongue and Foreign Language 111

CHAPTER 6: PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS: THE TRAVELER'S RECORD 115

Pedagogy as "Seeing" the Possibility 115
Difference as a Source of Empowering 117
On the Margin, We Can See More 119
Enriching the World in Which We Live 122
Making a Reflective Space: Writing 125

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION: SETTING OFF ON A NEW TRAVEL 131

Personal Reminiscence of the Travel 132

Setting Off on a New Travel 135

REFERENCES 140

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION: PREPARING FOR TRAVEL

Living and Studying in a Foreign Language

The following are some impressions of foreign graduate students who describe their experiences of studying in Canada in what is for them the foreign language of English:

> After leaving my home country, I now realize that I am in trouble, unexpectedly but quite seriously. This is my very first class and I have been most anxious about making "a good first impression." I prepared for some good "speech" about myself, my interests and goals here in Canada, and even a couple of nice jokes following the suggestion from a "Study Abroad Guide." Some of the classmates already take their turns to introduce themselves to their classmates and the professor. Finally my turn comes and I was completely ready to go! "My name is Jinn and I am from Korea . . ."
>
> "Oh, you are from Korea?" professor interrupts. "I heard a lot of people in North Korea have suffered and died from extreme hunger. Is there any humanitarian effort from the South to save the North Korean people? Could you tell us about that? A little bit?"
>
> "Uh . . . Uh . . . Uh . . ." My heart is violently pounding, ignoring my effort to think clearly. I can't think, I can't remember even the easiest word.

I cannot help but realize that my life here will never be as easy as I had hoped so! (Jinn)[1]

I am sitting in the graduate seminar. But I can hardly distinguish the words spoken by the students around the room. It's like I am listening to a whistle of a train. The sound is approaching me, getting louder and louder, but soon after its apex it disappears without leaving anything behind. What is left is only the lingering sound in my ears. Another whistle blows, but it's monotonous sound does not stimulate my thought, does not move my emotion. How boring the sound of the foreign language really is! It's like a lullaby. (Guo)[2]

I have to read my English texts at least twice, often more than three times—whether it is a journal or a book. Even cartoons, I have to read carefully (what a funny thing this is! No one "reads" cartoons. Cartoon is for seeing not reading).

However, I cannot talk about what I have read in class. Talking is always others' share; and they may prepare by reading the material only once, or only a few pages.

---

[1] Jinn is a female student from Korea. She was a social studies teacher in her home country and hopes to return to her teaching position with more advanced knowledge and understanding through the experience of studying abroad.

[2] Guo came from China. In his homeland he was a university teacher. He likes living in Canada and wants to stay here even after finishing his degree. However, language barriers always make him nervous when he considers the possibility of living in Canada permanently.

You may say, "It's your own fault. Why don't you speak out?" Well, then, you have no understanding at all of what it is like to be a foreign student in a foreign language, I guess. (Jung)[3]

"I know this." I almost raised my hand, but on second thought, I feel relieved because I actually didn't! Although no other classmates seem to know the answer, I cannot help but keep silent. It is not only a matter of confidence. I practically know that I had better not say anything. When I know the answer, colleagues and even professors may recognize it by noticing the sparkle of my eyes, nod of my head, assuring smile on my face. However, once I try to answer the question or explain something in English, then my speaking up will be a disaster. It has been disaster so far. I would rather take a safe way than ruin my image by stammering and stuttering with my crude English. It seems much better for me to have a reputation like "a shy person" than "bothering one." (Cha)[4]

You know what? I hate people who whisper when they talk. I hate people who talk too fast as if they are in an emergency situation. I hate people who frequently interrupt others, even though they are not finished talking. And

---

[3] Jung is a typical Korean woman, a little shy and quiet. Although she is studying very hard, she often doubts her academic achievement because she always feels that her English is not good enough.

[4] Cha is a male student from Korea, quite erudite and thoughtful. He said that his self-esteem has been seriously damaged by his poor ability to speak and listen in English. For Cha, learning his subject matter is not very difficult. Rather, a more challenging task for him is to express, discuss, and write what he is learning in this foreign language, English.

most of all, I hate myself because I can't even express my anger with this foreign language! (Seong)[5]

These accounts, told by students from Pacific Rim countries, reveal experiences of just a small portion of their lifeworld and only in a fragmented way. Yet the experiences may lead to serious but uncomfortable questions: "Why am I here?" "What am I doing here?" "Should I be here?" Of course, these may seem somewhat silly questions, because the students know well why they are here. They came to this foreign country with a definite goal or purpose, "to further their studies." They brought not only some belongings and essentials that would be needed to live in another country, but also many expectation and hopes for the advancement of their study.

Several foreign students who participated in this study told me that they had made plans to cope with some anticipated problems even prior to their leaving for the country (Canada) where they wanted to pursue their studies. There are many kinds of foreseeable predicaments: culture shock, different physical environments such as different time zones, unfamiliar space, different climate, strange accommodation, financial concerns, homesickness, and, above all, language problems. Foreign students

---

[5] Seong is the oldest participant in this study. He thinks that he has been educated very well in a Korean way, but this well-established cultural identity as a Korean somewhat prevents him from improving his language skill and thus obstructs his study in Canada. For example, he says that "cutting into others' speech," although it may be in the midst of a heated discussion, is considered rude behavior in Korea. One must wait for the other to finish his/her speech. On the other hand, the speaker should prepare what he/she is going to say and how it will be said before saying a word. Commencing the speech without any preparation, and thus stumbling and stammering during the speech, is also regarded as rude in Korea. This cultural knowledge thwarts his participation in many kinds of class activities simply because he has difficulty in finding the opportunity to cut into a conversation. When he is finally prepared with something to say, the discussion has already moved in another direction.

themselves know very well that their success in another country depends on how well they anticipate and prepare to deal with those difficulties.

However, even if they are well prepared for living in a foreign country, the new reality they experience does not smoothly fit into their previous scheme. Such incongruity between their plans and the realities can make life full of hardship. As a matter of fact, for foreign students things rarely go easy, and even fulfilling most basic needs is not at all an easy task in a foreign land. But the most prominent problem with which foreign students have to cope is the constant feeling that they are not doing well what they should do; that is, "study." It is "study" that brought them to this foreign country. They bravely decided to go abroad to study, despite all of the anticipated problems. Thus, if they do not feel good about their academic progress, it means that there is no reason for them to be here, in a foreign country, far away from their homeland. Questions such as "Why am I here?" "What am I doing now?" or even "Who am I?" frequently recur in foreign students' minds. For they know well that they are not just tourists.

Then why do they feel uncomfortable in their study? What makes them think that they are not doing well? There may be many different reasons, but one thing in particular stands out in the above descriptions: the fact that they have to do their study in a foreign language, not in their mother tongue. Of course, this is not at all a new discovery. We surely expect that foreign students may have difficulties because of the differences between their mother tongue and the new language of their host country. That is why we regard overcoming language barriers as the key element of success in studying abroad. That is why we frequently recommend that foreign students *master*

the language of the host country as soon as possible, and by all means. They have to increase their vocabulary as much as possible. Memorizing basic sentences and structures will help them acquire proficiency in their language skills. Even taking seriously some of the psychological tips (such as "Act confident; then you'll get it!") would be helpful in their foreign-language learning.

Although this commonsensical advice is not misdirected, many foreign students find it useless or somehow inappropriate in helping them to understand their actual living situations. It does not cover what foreign students really experience in a foreign language. There are too many factors and there is too much challenge in their experience of foreign language that cannot just be "mastered."

> Recently, my five-year-old daughter shows a great deal of interest in learning language; both Korean and English that she should be able to read, write and speak. She has been here since she was two and attended daycare center until now. She also started kindergarten this September. So, in some sense, English is more likely her mother tongue, even though we (my wife and I) insist that she should speak only Korean at home. A couple of days ago, I was helping my daughter learn the number system in Korean. But she wasn't doing it well. I could not understand why she didn't get it, because she can already count numbers in English. It seemed to me that she was thinking numbers in English first, and then trying to match them in Korean. She could count one to ten in an orderly fashion in Korean, but when I mingled their order, she couldn't count. It was obvious that she had a sense of number in English, but not in Korean.

> Today, I was helping her solve the questions in her workbook. It is about English antonyms and synonyms. But, this time, I was the person who struggled. An example: find the antonym of the word, "go." Without hesitation, I said that the answer should be "come." That is the way most Koreans think of the antonym. My daughter seemed to be confused for a while, and finally said to me, "I think it would be 'stop.'" And she was right! The answer is "stop." Suddenly, I realized. This may be the reason that I have been struggling in my study. Even though I know the words, I do not have the same sense that native speakers have. I do not think the same way that they do. I am glad my daughter has it. Somehow I cannot help but envy her. (Cha)

The difficulty that foreign students may have in a foreign language setting is not just the lack of vocabulary and knowledge of the grammar; there is something more than that, even though it is difficult to grasp what that is. For example, Mikhail Bakhtin (1986) explains that it is less the formal grammar and learnable rules that constitute fluency in a language than the more elusive sense of the "utterances" that are internalized in a more pathic and less intellectual or cognitive manner. Martin Heidegger (1982) sees language having a more profound relation to the existence of human beings. He argues that language is the very manifestation of our Being. Or it may be "a sense" or "a way of thinking," as Cha mentioned in the above anecdote. Whatever it is, it is likely that we barely know of it.

Perceptive Changes of Reality

In her provocative biography *Lost in Translation*, Eva Hoffman (1989) eloquently describes her alienation and problems with the English language, which is not her mother tongue:

> The problem is that the signifier has become severed from the signified. The words I learn now don't stand for things in the same unquestioned way they did in my native tongue. "River" in Polish was a vital sound, energized with the essence of riverhood, of my rivers, of my being immersed in rivers. "River" in English is cold—a word without an aura. It has no accumulated associations for me, and it does not give off the radiating haze of connotation. It does not evoke. (p. 106)

This description somehow shows us how strange everything can seem in a foreign language. Once we are severed from our mother tongue, even the most familiar things become quite unreal in our perception. Of course, there may be a certain word in a foreign language that refers to the same thing that it does in our mother tongue. However, a simple replacement with a foreign word does not evoke the same feeling or inspiration that we usually have in our mother's language. This description gives us a chance to glance over the intimate relationship between language and our perception.

What do we perceive as real? We may readily say that our experiences are real. We cannot think of our existence as just an illusion or a sham. As well, things surrounding us and the world in which we live also seem real. We can imagine but not really believe that we are living our lives in the midst of a mirage or a fantasy. And yet,

how can we affirm that this is the case? How do we come to know our selves and the things in the world as real? Indeed, such an affirmation of reality is possible in the sensibility of our experiences as we live through them. In other words, we find out our reality by actually living through it, by living as our selves, and by living with the things in the world. In a sense, our life itself is a perpetual process of affirming what is real to us.

What we affirm as real is constantly expressed through language. We give names to things and assign certain meanings to words. We try to illuminate and capture the truth in our reality and give an expression to it. Here, someone may object to this assertion and ask, "Why do we need to express through language what we find out of ourselves and the things in the world?" This may be an answer: "Language bids us to do so." As many phenomenologists argue (e.g., Heidegger, 1971; Merleau-Ponty, 1962), language is not just an instrument of human communication, but also the way we exist or the way we live in this world. We are "a languagely being." In this sense, we are used by language as much as we are able to use language (Ihde, 1999, p. 36). Not only are we speaking language, but language also speaks through us. Language shows us reality, and we give an utterance to it.

Words and names (in other words, *language*) in their origins are not identical with things. Rather, they indicate or point out things. Therefore, we cannot equate language itself with our reality, and yet we can identify and affirm the reality that language brings forward by our experience. Through experience, and through our history of living with those things, words stand for things, and they evoke the reality in which we find ourselves.

In our mother language we hardly question the relationship between words and the things for which they stand because we have affirmed by our experience the reality that the words bring forward. Therefore, when we are using a certain word, it is not only because the word is the one with which we are mainly familiar, but also because we think or feel that the word is most proper in the context of expressing what is real to us. Words connote the way we stand in the world and the way we perceive our reality.

Such perception of the reality cannot help but be changed when we are in another language. "Being in a different language" itself means that we are now in a different reality. The words we learn anew in a foreign language have no ground in our experience. Language has its own historicity, and the words we have in our mother language are the result of our previous affirmation of the reality and our giving an utterance to it. In this sense, the new words that we have just learned in a foreign language have no history with us; they have no accumulated associations for us. Hence, in a foreign language we are forced to re-establish the relation between words and things from the beginning.

For foreign students nothing can be taken for granted as it was in their mother tongue. Their experience of study in a different language setting involves this kind of fundamental changes of perception of the reality, and thus such experience itself becomes a significant "event," which they desperately want to figure out and make sense of. "How does this experience change my life, my reality, and my self?" Not all foreign students overtly ask this question or make it a theme for their study. However, they can never avoid such a question because if is all about the change of reality in which they reside, and the living in this changed reality. How do they experience this

change? How do they perceive the new reality in a different language? How do they cope with such a new way of living?

The Research Question

The overriding question in this study is, "What is it like to study in a foreign language?" This question seemed fairly simple at first glance. However, when I seriously engaged in the question, many other questions popped up, and each of them also invited many more sophisticated and complicated questions. For example, the question "What is the meaning of *mother tongue* or *foreign language*?" immediately resulted in quite a number of subquestions, such as, "What makes a certain language our mother tongue?" "Is it the language that our parents speak?" "Is it the language that would cultivate us?" "Why do we have only one mother tongue instead of having two or multi mother tongues?" Is it also possible to say, "I have only one language, but it is not my mother tongue"? (Derrida, 1998) The etymological root of *foreign* is the Latin word *forāneus*, which means "residing outside" (*Si-sa Elite English-Korean Dictionary*). Then what does it mean to reside inside/outside a language? In what sense is it that language resides inside/outside me? What is the relation between language and being? If language is the "house of being" or a "home," as many phenomenologists have argued, what does it mean to dwell in a foreign language? Can we truly find a home in a foreign language? And so on.

These were only the tip of the iceberg, and their profundity seemed far beyond my reach. None of these questions are likely to have a simple answer, and I have been overwhelmed for a long time by "the multiplying nature of the original question." However, in this moment of struggling, I gained some insights from Heidegger (1959):

> To question is to will to know. He who wills, he who puts his whole existence into a will, is resolved. Resolve does not shift about; it does not shirk, but acts from out of the moment and never stops. Re-solve is no mere decision to act, but the crucial beginning of action that anticipates and reaches through all action. To will is to be resolved. (pp. 20-21)

According to Heidegger, "questioning" is "willing to know," and one who participates in questioning is already resolved, if he/she does not insist that resolving should have an end. Resolving is an ongoing process that never stops. Moreover, resolving is not only a decision to act, but also the crucial beginning of action. To have questions means to begin a certain action.

Gadamer (1989) also supports this Heideggerian idea about questioning; he says, "In order to be able to ask, one must want to know, and that means knowing that one does not know" (p. 363). If one already knows the answer, there is no need to question, to will to know about that matter. This unsettledness of the answer is not vicious, but rather makes the question a true question. Again, in Gadamer's words:

> To ask a question means to bring into the open. The openness of what is in question consists in the fact that the answer is not settled. It must still be undetermined, awaiting a decisive answer. . . . The sense of every question is realized in passing through this state of indeterminacy, in which it becomes an open question. Every true question requires this openness. (p. 363)

Once I began to ask these questions, no matter how unsolvable they may have seemed, I had already begun a certain action, a critical action for exploring the theme. This questioning as the beginning of an action brings me toward the "openness," which addresses itself as the "possibility." I am thrown into the openness that gives me the freedom to find an answer. Just as resolving has no end, the answer that I am seeking does not express itself as a final product. Rather, I have to take part in the never-ending process of asking and finding answers. The essence of questioning is not to have correct answers, but "to have sense, a sense of direction" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 362).

To actually carry out the research project, the main question, "What is it like to study in a foreign language?" needs to be broken down into more concrete and manageable pieces—subquestions. In this context, "four existentials,"[6] as explicated by van Manen (2001a), will be employed to function as heuristic guides for exploring the students' lifeworld of learning and development—reflecting, reading, writing, speaking, interacting with other students in courses and seminars, listening to professors, participating in discussions, studying at home and in the office, and related scholarly activities such as using the library and doing research, which involves data collecting, analyzing, interviewing, and interpreting.

---

[6] Although "four existentials" will surely function as the focal points in this study, I also have to be aware that our experience and meaning cannot be completely covered by them. As a matter of fact, in phenomenological work it is very difficult to set up a frame beforehand and retain that frame to the end because an experience itself does not permit us to identify a certain aspect of the experience as belonging solely to a bodily or spatial dimension, for example. Experience itself is a unit that we cannot reduce into parts because they are interconnected within the unity. In a sense, experience always exceeds our attempt to make sense of it; thus, "four existentials" should be used carefully, bearing in mind that they are not a fixed procedure that we must follow, but rather "the heuristic guides" that will give us a sense of direction. They will be the main questions that I have to pursue in this research project, but, at the same time, they will be served by many other relevant questions. Furthermore, they will also reveal questions that I should pursue further.

Van Manen (2001a) sees existentials, such as *lived space* (spatiality), *lived body* (corporeality), *lived time* (temporality), and *lived human relation* (relationality or communality), as "fundamental lifeworld themes." Even though our lived experiences and the structures of meanings constitute the immense complexity of the lifeworld, those existentials may prove especially helpful guides for reflection in the research process in that they pervade the lifeworld of all human beings, regardless of their historical, cultural, or social situatedness.

Finally, the basic research question needs to be interpreted in a pedagogical context. This research is conducted not just to strive for insights that may be of interest to social and human science, but also to understand the orientation of my research questions as a pedagogical resolve.

Thus, the overriding research question of this study is:

"What is it like to study in a foreign language?"

The subquestions of this study are:

1. What is the phenomenology of space of students living in a foreign linguistic space?
2. How do students experience a sense of temporality when studying in a foreign language environment?
3. What is the corporeality of studying in a foreign language setting?
4. How do students experience the relationality of self and others in the social context of a foreign language?

5. What are pedagogical issues and consequences of teaching and learning in a foreign language environment?

6. What is helpful pedagogical advice for learning in a foreign language?

Obviously, the word *study* is central to this research and thus needs to be elaborated more. Etymologically, the English word study stems from the Latin word *studium*, which means "eagerness," "affection," and "painstaking application" (*Cassell Dictionary of Word Histories*, 1999). According to this etymological root, we can find at least two dimensions of the word study. First of all, the meaning of study is closely related to "some-thing," which is an object of the study. We can ask, "Eagerness to what?" "Affection for what?" "Application to what?" Thus, the meaning of study depends on the very "whatness"; in other words, the thing itself as the object of the study. This means that study is an effort to reach the very *thing* and to see or reveal its meaning and significance.

Second, to reach the thing, we need to have something that can mediate between the person who is engaging in study and the thing itself. Then what does mediate between that person and the thing? Heidegger (1962) would have said that language does. With a special relation to thinking, language opens up the paths to get to the thing itself. Of course, language does not do this without limitations. We frequently experience how much language falls short of describing or explaining what we really seek to understand. In particular, "what belongs to our inner life often seems quite beyond words" (van Manen, 1997, pp. xii-xiii). Nevertheless, language is the primary access to the *studium*. There is no other way to make the phenomenon of study intelligible. It is only through language that we can reflect on the world in which we

live, no matter how incomplete our linguistic efforts. In this sense the human being lives in language: Language is not just one of many abilities at our disposal; fundamentally and ultimately, we dwell in language (Otto, 1972. p.170).

This brief reflection on the relationship between *study* and *language* again raises questions such as, "If language is so central to the enterprise of human understanding, what then is it like to study something in a foreign language?" "What is the nature of the experience of study in a foreign language?" "How is this experience uniquely different from study in one's own native language?" "Does this experience of study in a foreign language have certain commonalities for students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds?"

But the reflection also leads to the realization that this research requires another level of reflexivity. Indeed, not only does this research focus on the question of what it is like to study in a foreign language, but also the study itself is conducted by a Korean researcher in the foreign language of English. Thus, the study inevitably must show what it is about. In a way, the study is an example of its own *studium*.

Curricular Context of the Study

Research is not only motivated by a newly arisen interest or a momentary curiosity, but is also incubated through the researcher's longtime journey into his/her area of study. This is also true for my research.

I came to Canada to further my study, especially to learn more about curriculum. I have already spent an extensive amount of time studying this field in Korea, and thus it is also true that I have already established a certain viewpoint of my own that is not

much different from the mainstream position of the Korean curriculum field. Because the curriculum field in Korea has a comparatively short history and most of its theoretical perspectives came from the West, unfortunately, it has not provided me with a clear sense of what curriculum is and what I have to do as a curriculum person. That is why I decided to go abroad for further study.

However, when I came to Canada, I became even more confused. This confusion came from two different directions. First, I found myself in a somewhat strange and alienating situation. Labeled as an "international student," I can no longer use my Korean language as the medium for my study. I have to use English to formulate thoughts, I hear myself trying to think in English when I speak, and I have to write reflective papers and converse with others in a linguistic space that is not my own. Certainly, English is a foreign language to me. But I am also a stranger to English or, more accurately speaking, a stranger to myself in the presence of this foreign language. I have felt suffocated and lost, while not even knowing what made me suffer and what carved such a big scar in my self-pride. One thing I know for sure: The difficulty that I had with English language is not just a lack of vocabulary and knowledge of the grammar or some such aspect of language as a system. There is something more than that, even though I have had a hard time grasping what that is. Whatever it is, it seems to me to belong to the realm of "the ineffable."

Second, the uncertainties, insecurities, and ambivalences experienced in study in a foreign language have been exacerbated by the fact that the subject of my study (that is, curriculum) is already marked by uncertainties and ambivalences of its own. Curriculum has a history that is not too long, but not too short, either. However, in

some sense it is the history, full of the struggle against such an embarrassing moment of answering even the most basic question of "the meaning of curriculum." This struggle has evolved into two different directions. First, the majority of educators and curriculum people have tried to develop special "theories," "definitions," and "concepts" to attract people's attention, enough to prohibit ordinary people from sharing them together. The most convenient way to do so was borrowing, following, and imitating the ready-made frames from other well-established professional areas, such as the social sciences and, especially, the natural sciences.

This is what seems to have happened in our field. "Historically, education in general, and the curriculum in particular, has sought to become more like a science" (Apple, 1975, p. 125). Curriculum became more or less a matter of technique, skill, or method to apply the results of scientific explorations into the practice. In so doing, it could secure its academic status as a discipline of "application" or "translation." Curriculum people could gain popular recognition of their professionalism—at least as a "quasi" or "semi" professional that we usually designate to a sort of "technician."

But can we be satisfied with all of this? Some educators appear to be, but not all. Pinar (1975) seems one of the unsatisfied. He once claimed that "the curriculum field has forgotten what existence is. It will remain moribund until it remembers" (p. 396). What does this mean? What is existence? Or existence of what? Why and in what ways have we forgotten it? What does it mean to remember? How can we do this?

Pinar (1975) provides an answer: *Lebenswelt*. What we have forgotten is the existence of *Lebenswelt*, our everyday lifeworld. We have forgotten it by being obsessed with abstraction and objectification of that world, with detaching ourselves

from our actual living situations. However, Pinar does not try to create a new definition of curriculum, as the scientific- or technocratic-minded curricularists have done so far. Instead, referring to its Latin root, *currere,* he suggests that we recover or bring back the original meaning of curriculum, which has for a long time been neglected. According to Pinar, curriculum is nothing but "the study of educational experience" (p. 400). How simple this is! Nonetheless, it resonates.

When I came to Canada, my initial theoretical stance was rather near that of scientific or technocratic curricularists. However, somehow my perspective has been changed in favor of Pinar's, thanks to the unique atmosphere of the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta, which encourages its students to "move away from the dominant technicist understanding of the world and to reorient themselves to a world grounded in the dwelling place of humans" (Aoki, 1987, p. 23), and which constantly emphasizes relating what they came to know to their living practice. Of course, I am still struggling to find and establish my own perspective on curriculum, and, if Pinar (1975) is right, this struggle is itself of necessity as long as I live, in that one's life becomes the inexhaustible source of curriculum.

I have found it ironic that curriculum scholars often talk about "the change of curriculum languages" as having almost the same connotation as "the change of perspectives in the curriculum field." In this sense, "learning a new language" has a double meaning to me: actual language learning, and learning from a thoroughly different perspective and philosophy. On the one hand, this study should help me to identify the horizon of my lifeworld and reach a deeper understanding of my own study experience in a foreign language environment. On the other hand, the study is an effort

to find and refine my own perspective and philosophy of curriculum as the subject of my study. This study will provide me with opportunities to relate such a perspective and philosophy to my own life and make itself the practice of living.

Significance of the Study

Globalization is today's most powerful term to indicate the changes of the world in which we live, or, at least, of our perception of that world (Amoore, 2001; CIEE, 1988; Kauffmann, 1992; Larson, 2002; Luhmann, 1997). What is blurred is not only the borders among nations, but also our living practice, our everyday lifeworld. The world is getting smaller or, in a way, compressed, thanks to the rapid development of instruments and means (such as information technology, communication and transportation, etc.) in almost every area of human living. At the same time, human living space is more extended than it was in the past, without being confined within the birthplace or not too remote neighbor area. Nowadays "going abroad," for whatever reason, is no longer the privilege of the few. This is also true for "studying abroad."

What kinds of people want to go abroad for study? What motivates them? What are they doing in a foreign country? What kinds of difficulties do they experience? In what ways can we help them to manage their study well? What influences do they inflict on both their host country and their home country? These are the questions that have driven research with regard to the phenomenon "study abroad" (Appiah-Padi, 1999; Arias, 1999; CIEE, 1988; Dunnett, 1981; Kinnell, 1990; Klineberg, 1979; Laubscher, 1994; McNamara & Harris, 1997; Sheh, 1994; Williams, 1986). Thanks to its newly gained interest and ever-growing popularity, the research in this area is quite prolific. However, among them, only a few (e.g., Igoa, 1995; Northey, 1985; Winning,

1991) have tried to understand the experiential quality of the phenomenon, instead of trying to find or establish some kind of quantitative facticity. Despite the massive volume of studies, somehow, the research in this area has failed to give us a deeper understanding of the phenomenon itself and the experience of those who are involved in it.

This study aims to explore foreign graduate students' lifeworld, focusing on their study experience in a foreign language environment; and it aims to reveal some of the existential qualities embedded in that particular experience. Although this project originally stems from my personal wanting to know and make sense of my own lifeworld, I certainly believe that this can also give insights into many others' lives, including those of foreign students themselves and their advisers, through bringing forth an intersubjective understanding of such an experience. Although this study deals with the experience of a foreign language, the understanding that I seek is not necessarily limited to the area of ESL pedagogy. What I am dealing with in this study is also another level of language, the language of curriculum, and thus this study will eventually become a way of my doing curriculum. In this sense, such an understanding that this study will come up with may help people in my field of study (curriculum) too.

CHAPTER 2:

PHENOMENOLOGY AS A METHODOLOGY:

A MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

The primary concerns of this dissertation are to explore foreign graduate students' lived experience of study in a new language environment and capture the meanings embedded in that particular experience. Thus, this study will take a phenomenological stance, because phenomenology has a strong orientation and commitment to lived experiences and the meanings that those experiences bring together. The notion of *lived experience* takes a central position in this study, not only in that it will become a main object of the investigation, but also in that it possesses special methodological significance with regard to this study.

The concept of lived experience refers to our experience of the world before any kind of objectification and idealization. It addresses "the intent to explore directly the originary or prereflective dimensions of human existence" (van Manen, 2003). All of our knowledge and cognitive activities are based on the world in which we are already living. However, as Merleau-Ponty (1962) puts it, "The world here is not an object such that I have in my possession the law of its making; it is the natural setting of, and field for, all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions" (p. xi). The world exists even before any possible analysis of ours, and thus it becomes a necessary existential condition of human being: "being-in-the-world." Differentiating from "the world of abstraction," such a world is often called the *lifeworld* as the "world of immediate

experience," the world as "already there," "pregiven," the world as experienced in the "natural, primordial attitude," that of "original natural life" (Husserl; as cited in van Manen, 1997, p. 182).

And yet, in our theoretical attitude, especially in its modern scientific sense, the immediacy and concreteness of the lifeworld are often muted or killed in favor of some abstracted and objectified understanding of that world, betraying original and prereflective dimensions of our existence. Therefore, phenomenology aims at returning to the lifeworld, which, it believes, "furnishes the source for all cognitive performance and all scientific determination" (Husserl; as cited in Moran, 2000, p. 12). "All its efforts are concentrated upon re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world," says Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. vii). After all, phenomenology is an effort to return to the lifeworld of the living human subject and an appeal to turn our attention back to our everyday lived experience.

However, as van Manen (2001a) points out, phenomenology itself includes various schools and movements that are often identified with the thinking of outstanding scholars. He cautiously distinguishes the phenomenological traditions as "transcendental,"[7] "existential,"[8] "hermeneutical,"[9] "linguistical,"[10] "ethical

---

[7] This orientation is identified with the pioneering work of Husserl and his contemporary colleagues, such as Eugen Fink, Tymieniecka, and Van Breda.

[8] The representatives of this orientation are Heidegger, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, Marcel, and many others.

[9] The works of Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur are associated with this phenomenological tradition.

[10] This orientation is linked with the work of Blanchot, Derrida, Foucault, and other French language orientated scholars, although some of them do not acknowledge their linkage with phenomenology.

phenomenology,"[11] and last, but not least, "phenomenology of practice."[12] Of course, as van Manen acknowledges, "This list of orientations is not necessarily complete" (p. 5), and some of them partially overlap. "But these are designations that seem to recur throughout the philosophical and phenomenological literature" (p. 5).

In some sense it is quite understandable that phenomenology has evolved into such a variety of schools and movements in that phenomenology is exactly the attempt to make the matters manifest as they manifest themselves. "As a radical allegiance to the things themselves, phenomenology can never be a single method" (Moran, 2000, p. 227). Heidegger (1994) also emphasizes:

> There is no such thing as *the one* phenomenology, and if there could be such a thing it would never become anything like a philosophical technique. For implicit in the essential nature of all genuine method as a path towards the disclosure of objects is the tendency to order itself always toward that which it itself discloses. (p. 328)

Accordingly, I have to identify which orientation is more suitable for my research. Among many different positions in the phenomenological tradition, "phenomenology of practice" is more appropriate in the context of this study. I myself have a strong commitment to education as a practical field, and this study is also

---

[11] Scheler initiated this ethical orientation, but the most prominent thinker in this tradition is Levinas.

[12] The representatives of this tradition are Binswanger, van den Berg, Buytendijk, Linschoten, Langeveld, Bollnow, Amadeo Giorgi, Patricia Benner, and Max van Manen. Their major concern lies in making phenomenology doable and usable not only in their professional contexts, but also in the contexts of practical concerns of everyday living.

motivated by my abiding concern about the well-being of foreign students. What I am trying to do is to explore their lifeworld, which is marked by ever-changing topography and its immense situatedness. In order to reach a deeper understanding of such, I need something that requires a "context sensitive," "eclectic," and "transdisciplinary" approach (van Manen, 2001b, p. 2). In other words, what I need is not something that is loaded with philosophical heaviness or theoretical gravity, but something that can actually illuminate and improve our living practice.

In light of this, the orientation of "phenomenology of practice" gains more appropriateness with regard to this study. This approach aims to help human science scholars, who are primarily interested in applying phenomenological method to their professional practice or aspects of their lifeworld. Unlike professional philosophers, human science scholars tend to be less interested in the philosophy of phenomenological method than in its practice and application. What they need is "context sensitive research methodologies that are relevant in their professional practice, and that are adaptive of changing social contexts and human predicaments" (van Manen, 2001b, p. 1).

Especially, "hermeneutic phenomenology," which was systemically developed by van Manen (2001a), will be more suitable for my research than any other form of inquiry. Such orientation may be called "experiential phenomenology," "lifeworld phenomenology" or "applied phenomenology" (p. 11). However, as its name indicates, this approach mainly acknowledges the importance of the role of hermeneutics in the research of practice. As van Manen (1997) explains:

> Hermeneutic phenomenology tries to be attentive to both terms of its methodology: It is a *descriptive* (phenomenological) methodology because it wants to be attentive to how things appear, it wants to let things speak for themselves; it is an *interpretive* (hermeneutic) methodology because it claims that there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena. The implied contradiction may be resolved if one acknowledges that the (phenomenological) "facts" of lived experience are always already meaningfully (hermeneutically) experienced. Moreover, even the "facts" of lived experience need to be captured in language (the human science text) and this is inevitably an interpretive process. (pp. 180-181)

In an effort to be sensitive to both its phenomenological and hermeneutical context of the practice, hermeneutic phenomenology has two methodological axes: "reduction" and "the vocative."

Reduction

Generally speaking, "Phenomenology is the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience" (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 2). However, what makes phenomenology a truly radical and anti-traditional way of philosophizing is its emphasis on avoiding "all misconstructions and impositions placed on experience in advance, whether these are drawn from religious or cultural traditions, from everyday common sense, or, indeed, from science itself'(Moran, 2000, p. 4). Through a rejection of all dogmatism, a suspicion of *a priori* metaphysical premises, and earlier accounts of the nature of knowledge,

"Phenomenology tries to revive our living contact with reality and return to concrete, lived human experiences in all its richness" (p. 5).

To achieve such a goal, phenomenology takes a special procedure, or rather an attitude, called *reduction*, which often goes by other names such as *epoche* or *bracketing*. Van Manen (2001a) explains that "the aim of reduction is to reachieve direct contact with the world by suspending prejudgments, bracketing assumptions, deconstructing claims, and restoring openness" (p. 22). However, van Manen (2001b) also points out that phenomenological reduction means not only to ignore those assumptions, claims, and prejudgments, but also to uncover or explicate them with a certain reflective attentiveness:

> The phenomenological reduction consists in the attempt not only to clear away (bracket), but to confront the traditions, assumptions, languages, and cognitions in order to understand how the existential 'facticities' of everyday lived experiences are actually constituted through them. (p. 3)

By bringing into open space our biases, preunderstandings, and beliefs regarding the phenomenon we now investigate, we are able not only to get rid of them, but also to use them against themselves through exposing their "shallow or concealing character" (van Manen, 1984, p. 46).

Although reduction is a unique methodological feature of phenomenology, it does not refer to a fixed, predetermined procedure that we should apply to the phenomenon that is being researched. "Rather the reduction refers to a certain reflective attentiveness toward the things in the world, resisting any kind of reductionism

understood as abstracting, codifying, shortening" (van Manen, 2001a, p. 23). In this sense, "phenomenological reduction is indeed less a technique than a 'style' of thinking, an attitude of reflective attentiveness to what it is that makes life intelligible and meaningful to us" (van Manen, 2001b, p. 4).

With regard to this study, what should be reduced can be discussed on many different levels or layers. For example, all kinds of theories and assumptions about language and language learning should be bracketed. What I intend to do in this study is not to identify which is the best among many competing theories or to confirm the facticity of a certain theory; rather, what I really want to do is to understand the experience as it is and to catch the meaning as it shows itself. As a matter of fact, I do not have any background in language or the linguistic area. Of course, this is certainly a "lack" on my part as a researcher. However, such a lack can also be a privilege in doing this work because I can see the phenomenon with somewhat fresh eyes without being hindered by some previously held theoretical framework that may get in the way of the current investigation. This kind of lack of knowledge or theoretical framework regarding the object of study traditionally means a defect or a flaw in the research process. However, phenomenology as a radical and transdisciplinary methodology can make such a lack an actual point of departure for an unbiased understanding of the phenomenon and open the possibility of more holistic understanding beyond the boundary of a certain discipline.

I have been involved in a certain research tradition, mainly natural science-like quantitative methodology. Of course, it has provided me with many useful research strategies and techniques. However, those strategies and techniques are somehow

defective in exploring and understanding human phenomena because they fail to acknowledge the very human condition: The human being is not just an object that functions under the law of nature like many other things in the world. "The human being is also a 'person' or a being that has 'consciousness' and that 'acts purposefully' in and on the world by creating objects of 'meaning' that are 'expressions' of how human beings exist in the world" (van Manen, 1997, p. 4). In this sense usual methods for natural science, such as detached observation, controlled experiment, and mathematical or quantitative measurement, have only limited application in exploring the meaningful world of human phenomena, and thus cannot guarantee the sort of understanding that illuminates the lived structure of human meanings. Thus my previous knowledge of and attitude toward research itself, the nature of data, the interpretation of techniques, strategies, procedures, validities, and the like should be suspended and re-examined; and this can be another important example of the reduction adopted in this study.

The Vocative

Phenomenology is an effort to "re-achieve a direct and primitive contact with the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. vii), and the reduction as the unique phenomenological method safeguards such an unmediated encounter with the world through a certain reflective attentiveness. Therefore a hermeneutic phenomenological researcher should constantly practice reduction to bring into nearness the aspects of meaning that belong to the phenomenon under investigation. However, the researcher's task does not end here, for the researcher's prime goal is not only to gain some insights for its own sake, but also to contribute to the field of professional practice by making

possible a better understanding of the phenomenon. In this sense Merleau-Ponty's (1962) following remark is quite intriguing: "Phenomenology is the study of essences. . . . But phenomenology is also a philosophy which puts essences back into existence" (p. vii). So this task of putting back one's insights into existence creates another important feature of phenomenological study, and that is the *vocative*.

Phenomenological understanding does not always come in a way that we can deal with it in clear-cut cognitive terms or grasp it with our intellectual competence. Rather, in many cases, "phenomenological understanding is distinctively existential, emotive, enactive, embodied, situational, and nontheoretic, and thus, it often appeals to our practical intuitive capabilities, and not just to our cognitive capacities" (van Manen, 1977a, p. 345). Phenomenological studies try to use not only cognitive but also noncognitive means, and the vocative dimension of phenomenological method chiefly focuses on the latter.

Van Manen (2001a) explains that "the aim of the vocation is to let things 'speak' or be 'heard' by bringing them into nearness" (p. 29). This has to do with the "recognition that a good phenomenological text has the effect that it can make us suddenly 'see' something in a manner that enriches our understanding of everyday life experience" (van Manen, 1997a, p. 345). Hermeneutic phenomenology does not seek to force readers to have a certain opinion or to persuade them to move in a certain direction. However, a good piece of phenomenological text has that kind of power too. This power is achieved not by coercion, but by evoking power of the text. We are trying to address something in the text. But, in a way, the text itself also addresses something through us. The vocative method in hermeneutic phenomenology is an effort

to catch and reveal what meanings the experience or the phenomenon in question addresses and to make the text exert its resonating power in its full potentiality. Hence the most important question that we should constantly ask throughout the entire research process is, "How can we make a text express meanings, even though those meanings cannot be communicated in the narrative prose of ordinary reports, scientific studies, etc?" (van Manen, 2001a, p. 22). Therefore, in this study, how I can let the experience show itself, how I can allow the meaning to reveal itself, will be one of the important methodological considerations.

Methods and Procedures

The meanings that phenomenology tries to reveal are not always in the realm of our cognitive grasp. Rather, more often they seem to belong to "the ineffable." In many cases phenomenology relies more on "showing" than on "giving a logical explanation" to the readers and expects that the meanings themselves will exert their resonating power through the text. Therefore, how to gather those "showable" materials (lived experience descriptions) is a key consideration in conducting this research.

Using the Personal Experience as a Starting Point

A pivotal point of phenomenological inquiry, in a methodological sense, is to gain access to the lived experience; that is to say, the pre-reflective dimension of our everyday living. Unfortunately, this task is not at all an easy thing to do, because many experiences that we are undergoing often conceal their essential features under our taken-for-granted attitude (the so-called "natural attitude"). Thus, in many cases phenomenological researchers try to begin their investigations with the experiences

through which they actually have gone or are still going, because "one's own life experiences are immediately accessible to him or her in a way no one else's are" (van Manen, 1997, p. 54). Therefore, in this study, my own personal experience will be used as the starting ground.

As an international student, I myself have experienced the perplexity, confusion, and ambiguity of living and studying in a foreign language. Such an experience has had a huge impact on my life, and I have certainly noticed many changes in me, in the way that I feel, think, and understand other people and things in the world. Although it has not always been clear to me what these changes mean or where they will lead me, my awareness of the changes has kept me motivated to question their nature and their implications in my life. It has also rendered me the ability to recognize the life experiences of other people who are in a similar situation. I believe that such motivation and acute awareness of other people's lived experience will help me as a human science researcher to conduct the investigation in the right direction.

Obtaining Experiential Descriptions From Others

> The point of phenomenological research is to "borrow" other people's experiences and their reflections on their experiences to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience in the context of the whole of human experience. (van Manen, 1997, p. 62)

In this study I also tried to gather other graduate students' descriptions of their experience of study in a foreign language environment.

Initially, I selected eight foreign graduate students[13] and asked them in a general interview about associated matters. The interviews were carried on in a relatively unstructured format and video-recorded for analysis and reflection. Each interview took about an hour, and I encouraged the participants to describe what they had experienced (or what they were currently experiencing). To avoid diffusing the interviews, the interviewees were asked to focus on describing an example of their actual feelings or perceptions "at a certain moment," instead of addressing their general opinions or arguing their points on a certain issue. After the initial interview, some participants were asked again to reflect on the transcription and interpretation. This meeting was carried on in a more conversational manner than that of a conventional type of interview. Unlike the initial interview, I encouraged the participants to freely express their own reflections and thoughts on the written description and to participate in a discussion with me.

However, to tell the truth, this interview process and the subsequent conversations did not go well, and I was somewhat disappointed in the results. Most interviewees agreed that their experience of studying in a foreign language has been quite special and eccentric and has made a huge impact on their lives. Yet they could

---

[13] Two Chinese and six Korean graduate students participated in this official interview process. Although I have had many unofficial conversations with many international students in various faculties and departments, only the graduate students enrolled in the Faculty of Education (three in the Department of Elementary Education and five in the Department of Secondary Education) were included in this interview. My previous experience of conversation with international students revealed that it is very difficult for them to provide good experiential descriptions if they do not have any understanding of qualitative (human science) research methodology. Thus, I selected eight foreign graduate students in the Elementary and Secondary Departments, in which various qualitative research methodologies have been adopted and have prevailed in order to explore the fundamental dimensions of our lived experiences. I also make use of some experiential descriptions that I received from unofficial conversations, if they can show the meaningful aspects of the experience.

not satisfactorily describe particular incidents that they had experienced. Some expressed slightly remorseful and somewhat agitating sentiments or made rather dull and trite statements about their perceived difficulties. Not only I as the researcher, but also the interviewees themselves were shocked to find out how much we do not know of ourselves and how much we do not understand of what we are doing. On the one hand, this exemplifies the difficulty of accessing the living dimension of the experience, even if it is not someone else's, but our own. On the other hand, such ignorance of our own lifeworld events necessitates an approach that takes our attention back to them and thus makes us pay heed to the fundamental facticities of our lives.

Making Use of Professional Authors' Texts

Because the descriptions from the interviews were, if not useless, not always concrete and descriptive enough, to show through experiential examples what the experience was like, I have included the existing literature as a source for experiential data. It is very difficult to provide a good experiential description without being highly sensitive and mindful of people and things around oneself. In addition, it also needs a certain amount of ability to command words and sentences. In this respect, consulting the works of professional writers may be a big help in this research, because their perceptiveness and intuitive sensitivity often help us to see through the fundamental aspects of our taken-for-granted life experiences and give us an opportunity to relive the moment of meaningfulness.

One prime example is Eva Hoffman's (1989) *Lost in Translation*. Her autobiography offers a very vivid description and interpretation of what it is like to live in a new language, although it is not exactly oriented toward a phenomenological study.

Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez by Richard Rodriguez (1982) provides an autobiographical account of living in a foreign language and addresses issues of language, literacy, schooling, and education in the context of the life of a Mexican-American immigrant. Ariel Dorfman's (1998) *Heading South, Looking North* is another autobiography that depicts the torn experience of living in between two languages. The book describes Dorfman's love-hate relationship with the US and the English language. Julia Kristeva's (1991) *Strangers to Ourselves* is another sourceful text. In this book she examines the history of foreigners in Europe and deals with the notion of stranger as well as the idea of strangeness within the self, a person's deep sense of being as distinct from outside appearance, and one's conscious idea of oneself. She stated, "By recognizing our uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from outside. The foreigner is within me, hence we are all foreigners" (p. 192). Derrida's (1998) *Monolingualism of the Other; or, the Prosthesis of Origin* gives valuable insights into the meaning of mother tongue and otherness in language. This book also addresses the problem of identity in language. In this manner, some (auto)biographies, novels, and poems of professional authors were broadly used in this study to show the living qualities of the experience.

Consulting Phenomenological Literature

Although phenomenology was established in the modern period, it has fascinated many intellectuals, stimulated a variety of philosophical movements, and led to a wealth of philosophical insights into human existence. Thus far, a large volume of phenomenological literature has appeared that deals with different areas of human experience. Therefore, as van Manen (1997) points out, phenomenological literature

itself can be a rich source of phenomenological inquiry, in that "phenomenological literature may contain material which has already addressed in a descriptive or an interpretive manner the very topic or question which preoccupies us" (p. 75). In this study I will consult various phenomenological texts, such as Heidegger's (1962) *Being and Time*, Heidegger's (1971) *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Merleau-Ponty's (1964) *Signs*, Merleau-Ponty's (1962) The *Phenomenology of Perception*, and Kwant's (1965) *The Phenomenology of Language*. These texts will help me to acquire broader understandings of language, being, and thinking and the relationships among them, even though they do not directly address the exact topics and themes of this study.

A Travel Metaphor: The Vessel of the Study

There are certain conventions and patterns to present one's research study to the public. However, as van Manen (1997) points out, "The studies that have followed such presentational formats are not always the most interesting or the most insightful" (p. 167). Instead of blindly sticking to those conventions and patterns, van Manen suggests that the researcher "search for a sense of organizational form and organic wholeness of the text consistent with the methodical emphasis of the research approach" (p. 168).

In this context the notion of *travel* seems quite appropriate for presenting this study. In fact, research is often compared to the process of journey or travel because of their structural similarities. First of all, the very notion of travel involves a movement from a familiar place to an unknown space. It begins with a wonder of the new world where we have not yet been and signifies a fundamental human desire to see that world with our own eyes, feel it firsthand, and learn something through the direct and

personal experience. Similarly, research is a sort of mental adventure for the unknown territory of truth, driven by the same human nature of wonder. It is an endeavor to thread out, by our own intellect, the path of knowledge and knowing that has never been laid before and hence has not yet been mapped.

Second, the metaphor of travel also presupposes transformation. Such transformation that characterizes travel does not come from just adding some exotic knowledge or information about the new world on the traveler's part. Travel is transformative because it not only replaces our various preconceptions of the unknown region with the firsthand experience, but it also changes the life perspectives of the traveling self. It is in this sense that the notion of travel can be differentiated from its perverted form, *tourism*. "The very success of 'tourism' is ironically destroying its original purpose—the original object of tourism is to provide change, but it is effected in conditions that preclude any genuine possibility of change" (Ryckmans, 1996, p. 59). Without actually touching the life of the traveling self, a journey cannot be called travel in the deeper sense although it left a full collection of unusual anecdotes and exotic stories. Hence, "journey, which started as an exploration of the outside world, often becomes a journey of the mind leading to a discovery of the inner self" (p. 52).

Much is the same in research. Research not only generates a set of fresh ideas, a new body of knowledge, or a store of novel information about something out there; but it also creates an inner space that makes the researcher confront his/her true self. Good research would let the researcher not only be a mere spectator of truth existing somewhere else. It also lets him/her be a finder of truth inside him-/herself. This self-

discovery enables the researcher not only to address something to public but also to be much more deeply involved in the public life as well as the private life than ever before.

Therefore, both notions, travel and research, not only refer to "leaving home" or "going out" for something out there, but they also presume "returning" to the place where the journey began and "coming back" to the self with fresh perspectives and newly gained wisdom. In a sense the ultimate point of travel may be found in this return to the starting place—"not the return of a tourist who has turned all around our Earth-ball, but the return of a true traveler, who progressively transformed a journey to the other end of the world, into a discovery of the inner self" (Ryckmans, 1996, p. 60).

> We shall not cease from exploration
>
> And the end of all our exploring
>
> Will be to arrive where we started
>
> And to know the place for the first time
>
> ("Little Gidding," T.S. Elliot; as cited in Ryckmans, 1996, p. 60)

Aside from such strong structural similarities, there is another good reason of adopting the travel metaphor for presenting this research. As stated earlier, this study takes a phenomenological stance that requires the researcher to keep the most radical and critical attitude toward all kinds of preconceptions, existing theories, and previously held knowledge about the phenomenon being investigated to overcome the taken-for-grantedness that stems from our natural attitude, and it becomes the most

important methodological feature of phenomenology. In this context the metaphor of travel gains its appropriateness once again, because the notion of travel also presupposes "dislodging the existing framework" and "seeing from a different angle." Van den Abbeele (as cited in Johnston, 1996) explains:

> The application of the metaphor of travel to thought conjures up the image of an innovative mind that explores new ways of looking at things or which opens up new horizons. That mind is a critical one to the extent that its moving beyond a given self of preconceptions or values also undermines those assumptions. Indeed, to call an existing order (whether epistemological, aesthetic, or political) into question by placing oneself "outside" that order, by taking a "critical distance" from it, is implicitly to invoke the metaphor of thought as travel. (p. 1)

Another significant aspect of the travel metaphor is that it reveals a certain mode of being. Travelers begin a journey by leaving home for a land that they have not seen before. Once they have stepped into the region, they immediately become strangers and no longer feel at home in that unfamiliar territory. Suddenly, they confront differences and surprises, and their usual way of feeling and thinking may not appropriately work in this strange land. Do they have a home? Yes, indeed. But their home is not "here" as the usual place it has been. Rather, home is "there," and no longer do the categories "here" and "there" have the same meaning to the travelers. Where do they belong, "here" or "there"? In this study I, as the researcher, become a traveler by embarking on a journey to the unknown territory of lived experiences and

meanings. The destination is the lifeworld of foreign students, who live in such an ambiguous space where the fragments of "here" and "there" are helplessly intermingled and thus are travelers themselves. Therefore, there are two different stories of journey involved in this study. But in this case these two are not separated from each other, because they are both parts of my life, and each indicates only a different mode of my being.

Outline of the Study

This study will therefore be presented by means of a structure that is analogous to that of travel. Chapter 1, Introduction: Preparing for Travel, and Chapter 2, Phenomenology as a Methodology: A Mode of Transportation, are dedicated to the introduction of what motivates me to commence this journey, where is the suppose-to-be destination, and how I intend to get there. While these are rather involved in the process of preparing for travel, the subsequent chapters portray what the travel is really like.

In Chapter 3, Language, Home and Abroad: The Roadmap of the Travel, I explore some of the themes emerging from the review of the phenomenological literature. When we decide to travel to a certain region, we get a map or guidebook, hoping to find information about the most efficient route, course, or significant sights and sites. Of course, the excitement that traveling provides does not always come from the sights that the map identifies, and the value of travel cannot be judged only by its efficiency or a sense of economy. However, because the map itself was drawn by someone who stepped onto the land before we did, we may expect that it can somehow inform us of significant spots, local customs, and the history of the place. Likewise,

consulting the phenomenological literature does not directly address the questions that made this journey begin, but it will give me an idea of where I stand now and the themes to which I should pay more attention.

Chapter 4, Lived Experience of Study in a Foreign Language: Travel Through the Mapped Region, and Chapter 5, Lived Experience of Study in a Foreign Language: Revisiting, are the central parts of this dissertation. In these chapters I offer the lived descriptions and anecdotes from many different sources (interviews, conversations, and relevant literature, etc.). These stories will reveal some meaningful dimensions of the experience. Each story is followed by my own reflections, which may help the reader participate vicariously in this quest for meanings. Chapter 4 centers around four existentials (space, time, body, and relation), and in Chapter 5 more complex and mixed aspects of the experience are addressed.

Chapter 6, Pedagogical Implications: The Traveler's Record, discusses significant pedagogical implications of the study. This study was basically motivated by my practical and pedagogical concerns about the well-being of foreign students, and that practical orientation has been maintained throughout the entire research process. Therefore, it is quite important to gather insights around this pedagogical interest and to create a reflective space in which those insights would be incorporated into a broader and deeper understanding. The conclusion follows. However, unlike in the usual sense of *conclusion*, which literally indicates the end point of the investigation, I identify areas for further exploration and raise more advanced questions, if it is possible. Travel may end by returning home. However, there will always come another day for a new journey.

CHAPTER 3:

LANGUAGE, HOME AND ABROAD: THE ROADMAP OF THE TRAVEL

In this chapter I explore some of the contemporary views of language. I discuss the implications of a technical-rationalistic conception of language. This view not only reigns in most academic discourses, but it also pervades our everyday thinking. Therefore, many foreign students recount their experience of study in a foreign language based on a technical-rationalistic view of language. However, this predominant account of language now faces some serious challenges in that it is far remote from our experiential reality. Consequently, I introduce some of the alternative views of language that base their objections mainly upon the experiential unfitness of the technical-rationalistic view. Although the discussion may be somewhat theoretical and lack concreteness, it will function as a guide for conducting subsequent experiential exploration. As we can see, these alternative views of language anchor our attention back at the experiential level, not in the theoretical-abstract account of language.

Language and Human Being

Whenever we ponder our "selves," we inevitably encounter the phenomenon of language. As van der Merwe (1996) states, "We always find ourselves within language, within a space established and defined by identities and differences constituted by language, a set or system of conditions, limitations and possibilities of meaning which mediate our experience of the world and ourselves" (p. 354). Thus we are said to have language by nature, which sharply distinguishes us from other earthly creatures. Hence

it is no surprise to say that language is the most prominent characteristic of humankind and the foundation of human being.

It is a matter of course then that language has been an object of all kinds of scientific and philosophical studies. "For many centuries thinking people have been trying to form an idea of what 'language in general' could be" (Kockelmans, 1972, p. 3). As a result, linguistics today enjoys progress that has not been witnessed in the past, and most modern philosophies are proud of their contributions to expounding the phenomenon of language. But no matter how intensively investigated it may have been, many of language's essential features still remain hidden, and we still feel embarrassed by the question, "What is language?" Or worse, gaining a genuine and authentic understanding of language becomes an ever more difficult task than at any other time in history, because our present condition is that we are still very much under the influence of the modern obsession with an instrumental or technical sort of rationality. Such mentality, mainly "led by the analytic method of experimental science and the structuralist method of the human sciences," reduces the phenomenon of language into a mere problem of an external and arbitrary sign system that presents or represents the object reality of the world, and thus "has nothing to do with the responsible subject of human history" (O'Neil; as cited in Merleau-Ponty, 1973b, p. xxvi).

With respect to technical rationality, this is exactly where phenomenologists such as Heidegger (1982) and Merleau-Ponty (1973b) voice their objections. Heidegger criticizes the current conception of language for its metaphysical characteristics. "Metaphysics tries to define language in terms of thinking, which is conceived as a human activity of representing objects, and thus language as a means for conveying

information about objects" (Gregory, 2004). In this conception, thinking is the determining factor in the relation between language and thinking, and thus language becomes a mere tool or instrument of expression in the service of thinking. Analytic philosophy offers a prime example of such a metaphysical conception of language. Heidegger (1982) observes:

> Of late, the scientific and philosophical investigation of languages is aiming ever more resolutely at the production of what is called "metalanguage." Analytical philosophy, which is set on producing this super-language, is thus quite consistent when it considers itself metalinguistics. That sounds like metaphysics—not only sounds like it, it is metaphysics. Metalinguistics is the metaphysics of the thoroughgoing technicalization of all languages into the sole operative instrument of interplanetary information. Metalanguage and sputnik, metalinguistics and rocketry are the Same. (p. 58)

In the same vein, Merleau-Ponty (1973b) problematizes the current conception of language that regards language as "a fabulous apparatus that enables us to express an indefinite number of thoughts or objects through a finite number of signs" (p. 4). This conception prevails not only in our common-sense attitudes, but also in the exact sciences:

> It is frequently repeated that science is a well-formed language. This means also that language is the beginning of science and that the algorithm is the mature form of language. Now, science attaches clear and precise significations to fixed signs. It fixes a certain number of transparent relations

> and, to represent them, it establishes symbols which in themselves are meaningless and can therefore never say more than they mean conventionally. Having thus protected itself from the shifts in meaning which create error, science is in principle assured at any moment of being able completely to justify its claims by appealing to its initial definitions. (p. 4)

Merleau-Ponty (1974) views the scientific conception of language as stemming from the vain pursuit of a "universal language." He defines universal language and explains why he objects to this conception in the following passage:

> The concept of an eidetic of language and a universal grammar which would establish the forms of signification indispensable to every language if it is to be a language, and which would allow us to think with complete clarity about empirical languages as "confused" realizations of the essential language. This project assumes that language is one of the objects supremely constituted by consciousness, and that actual languages are very special cases of a possible language which consciousness holds the key to—that they are systems of signs linked to their meaning by univocal relationships which, in their structure as in their function, are susceptible to a total explication. Posited in this way as an object before thought, language could not possibly play any other role in respect to thought than that of an accompaniment, substitute, memorandum, or secondary means of communication. (p. 81)

Whatever it is called—metalanguage or universal language—the predominant image of language, both in our ordinary conception and even in the fields of rigid sciences, is much like that of an instrument that we can use at our will, any time and anywhere. Thus, it is conceived that language belongs to us and is in our possession just like any object in our pockets.

> I think it is somewhat absurd for foreign students to study something in English. Yeah, it's quite true except for students whose major is English. If my major were English, I might not feel that way at all. However, my study interest is in Biology, not English. To me, *English is just an instrument to study Biology*. How could I spend my time studying English? I don't even have enough time to study Biology. It's really an absurd situation. But I have to engage exactly in that kind of absurdity. I have to split my energy into doing two things at the same time; on the one hand studying Biology and on the other hand studying English. How can I match the native English students who don't have to split their energy? This makes me feel nervous, stressed and makes me feel I am retarded. (Kang)[14]

As Kang's remark reveals, many foreign graduate students who participated in this study also think of language in such a way; that is, as an instrument and an abstract system. English is just another container that is filled with human ideas and thoughts. Because what they are interested in is learning these ideas and thoughts, foreign

---

[14] Although he is not an official informant in this study, Kang gave me a number of insightful comments. He came to Canada seven years ago and is still studying biology as a doctoral student.

students regard English as an instrument or a conveyer by which to access the minds of great Western thinkers. Therefore, a foreign language for them is nothing but a necessary obstacle or even a waste of time in their study efforts. The word *absurd* describes exactly this kind of attitude, which is not at all rare among foreign students.

However, Heidegger (1982) and Merleau-Ponty (1973b) point out that this one-sided and asymmetrical relationship between human beings and language is somewhat wrongly conceived. Language has a much deeper involvement in the affairs of humans, and thus the phenomenon of language should be approached in a way that reveals its fundamental relation to human being. Of course, these authors do not want to negate everything that comes from the existing scientific and philosophical investigation of language. They certainly believe that such investigation has its own particular justification and retains its own importance. But scientific and philosophical information about language is one thing; an experience we undergo with language is another (Heidegger, 1982, p. 59). And it is our experience of language that ultimately gives us a chance to glimpse what language really is, because the most fundamental relationship that ties us to language is the fact that we cannot stop experiencing it, even a moment, until we meet our final destiny, death.

Thus, any phenomenological investigation of language begins with an examination of our actual experience of language. But, to do this, we have to give up the kind of attitude that "reduces the nature of language to a concept, so that this concept may provide a generally useful view of language that will lay to rest all further notions about it" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 190). That is why Heidegger frequently uses a somewhat nonsensical and seemingly empty tautology, "language is language."

Language itself is language and nothing else besides. How is that supposed to get us anywhere? Heidegger (1971) answers, "We do not want to get anywhere. We would like only, for once, to get to just where we are already" (p. 190).

Alternative Views of Language

"We do not wish to ground language in something else that is not language itself, nor do we wish to explain other things by means of language" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 191). Then how does one start the investigation of the phenomenon of language? According to Heidegger (1971, 1982), we can commence our investigation by carefully listening to what language itself speaks. Because we do not want to place language within our own speaking but within itself, we leave the speaking to language. Hence "to reflect on language means to reach the speaking of language" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 192).

What is speaking? Speaking is defined for the most part as putting into action our speech organs. In this view, "To speak is to utter and communicate one's thoughts and emotions through audible words, that is, with one's voice" (Kockelmans, 1972, p. 3). According to Heidegger (1971), three points are taken for granted in such a characterization of speaking:

> First and foremost, speaking is expression. The idea of speech as an utterance is the most common. It already presupposes the idea of something internal that utters or externalizes itself. If we take language to be utterance, we give an external, surface notion of it at the very moment when we explain it by recourse to something internal. Secondly, speech is regarded as an

> activity of man. Accordingly we have to say that man speaks, and that he always speaks some language. Hence we cannot say, "Language speaks." For this would be to say: "It is language that first brings man about, brings him into existence." Understood in this way, man would be bespoken by language. Finally, human expression is always a presentation and representation of the real and the unreal. (p. 192)

Of course, "No one would dare to declare incorrect, let alone reject as useless, the identification of language as audible utterance of inner emotions, as human activity, as a representation by image and by concept" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 193). However, the fact that this view is correct is one thing; whether it should hold sway over the whole field of the varied scientific perspectives on language is another. Let us suspend our judgment on this problem for a moment and move on a little further.

Human beings speak, says Heidegger (1971), and, in this speaking, they listen to what language has to say. Thus the important issue here is not so much that people speak but rather that something is said. However, to say something and to speak are not identical. One can speak endlessly, without saying much. It is also possible to say much without speaking and by keeping silent. Then what does *say* really mean? Etymologically, to say means to point out, to show, to let something appear, to let something be seen or heard (Kockelmans, 1972, p. 24). Therefore, to speak to one another means:

> to say something, show something to one another, and to entrust one another mutually to what is shown. To speak with one another means: to tell of

> something jointly, to show to one another what that which is claimed in the speaking says in the speaking, and what it, of itself, brings to light. (Heidegger, 1982, p. 122)

Thus the very essence of language is to be sought not so much in speaking as in a primordial "saying," taken as "showing" and "making appear" (Kockelmans, 1972, p. 24). But speaking is also listening; speaking is listening to the language we speak. Speaking is possible because we always have already listened to the language. What we hear and listen to in this case is the "saying" of a language (Heidegger, 1982, p. 126). Accordingly, we listen to language in such a way that we let it say its saying to us. Whenever we are listening to something, we are letting something be said to us. "We let its soundless voice come to us, and then demand, reach out and call for the sound that is already kept in store for us" (p. 124).

Our own speaking, which essentially implies our listening to a language, can allow language as "saying" to speak itself out to us only insofar as our own Being is already open to such "saying" (Kockelmans, 1972, p. 25). We hear "saying" only because we belong within it. Only to those who belong to a language does the language grant the possibility of speaking. This granting, which goes on continuously in each concrete act of human's speaking, is what lets us attain the possibility of speaking. "In the granting of primordial saying the essence of language is to be found" (p. 25).

But how does man speak? What is it to speak? In speech, first of all, we find names. The speaking names the things. Yet "this naming does not hand out titles, it does not apply terms, but it calls into the word" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 198). The naming,

which is also a part of primordial saying, thus calls and brings what is called closer. However, this bringing closer does not bring what is called nearer in the sense of putting it down in what is present; what is called remains at a distance in which it remains as absent. Thus the call brings the presence of what was previously uncalled into a nearness. Saying calls something, as it were, back and forth, calling it to become present and nevertheless summoning it to remain absent at the same time (Kockelmans, 1972, p. 26).

What does the call summon? It calls things, bids them to come. Where? The place of arrival is the world. It is to the world that saying calls the things that are summoned; it invites them as things to "concern" man (Kockelmans, 1972, p. 26). The things that were named, thus called, gather the world around themselves. "This gathering, assembling, letting-stay is the thinging of things" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 199). In the naming, the things named are called into their thinging, and thinging unfolds world in which things abide and so are the abiding ones. So just as primordial saying summons things, it also calls the world. It entrusts world to the things and simultaneously keeps the things in the splendor of world. "This world grants things their proper modes of being, whereas things 'bear' their own world" (Kockelmans, 1972, p. 26).

Therefore, primordial saying speaks by bidding things to come to world and world to things. The two modes of bidding are different but not separated, nor merely coupled together. Rather, they penetrate each other, and encounter in the middle. In it they are intimate, but this intimacy of world and thing is not a fusion. Even there they

remain distinct in their closeness. "In the between of world and thing, division prevails: a dif-ference" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 202).

The dif-ference carries out world in its worlding, carries out things in their thinging, and thus carries them toward one another. Hence the dif-ference is neither distinction nor relation. Rather, it is the dimension within which, in their closeness, they can be themselves with regard to each other. "In the bidding that calls thing and world, what is really called is: the dif-ference" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 203). So primordial saying of language calls "the separation of between, the gathering middle, in whose intimacy the bearing of things and the granting of world pervade one another" (p. 204).

In this way primordial saying makes the world and things be what they are. But it is through "appropriation" that the saying makes world and things achieve what is proper to them. Heidegger (1982) maintains that:

> the moving force in Showing of Saying is Owning. It is what brings all present and absent beings each into their own, from where they show themselves in what they are, and where they abide according to their kind. This owning which brings them there, and which moves Saying as Showing in its showing we call Appropriation. (p. 127)

This appropriation, which comes about through the saying of language, is never the effect of a cause or the consequence of an antecedent. In the manifestation of saying it can be experienced only as that which grants. "There is nothing else from which the Appropriation itself could be derived, even less in whose terms it could be explained"

(Heidegger, 1982, p. 127). Thus, the appropriation is not the result of something else, but a most original granting that makes anything present a "there is. . . ." The only thing that can be said of this appropriation is that *it appropriates*: It lets things be what they really are; it makes the world come to the fore in its proper character and grants to human beings an abode in their own proper mode of Being so that they can manifest themselves as speaking. Thus "the only thing that man can do in speaking is to listen to the primordial appropriation which comes about in the saying of language and try to respond to it in his own speech" (Kockelmans, 1972, p. 27).

Although this Heideggerian account is described mainly from the side of language, Gadamer (1989) provides an explanation based on the human side. He argues that "language has its true being only in dialogue, in *coming to an understanding*" (p. 446). He also says, "Language is the medium in which substantive understanding and agreement take place between two people" (p. 384). However, this does not mean that language is any kind of tool that is completely in our possession. For "the more genuine a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner" (p. 383). A true conversation is not something that we conduct, but something that we fall into, and "coming to an understanding is not a mere action, a purposeful activity, a setting up of signs through which I transmit my will to others" (p. 446). Rather, it is a life process in which a community of life is lived out, and thus language is by nature the language of conversation. "In short, to be human is to engage in the life processes of coming to an understanding (everyday coping), processes that paradigmatically occur in conversation and are also carried out in reading and writing" (Stewart, 1995, p. 112). Stewart summarizes this Gadamerian view well:

> This view emphasizes that understanding is a mode of being manifested in concrete events of conversing and that ultimately these *events* are what the term *language* labels. Thus the traditional distinction between language and communication materially altered, or even effaced. No longer is the former simply an instrument used to accomplish the latter. In other words, language is no longer understood simply to be an abstract system of semiotic units instrumentally employed by humans pursuing the goal of communicating. Instead, it is acknowledged that humans engage in understanding ("worlding") linguistically, and that this verbal-and-nonverbal languag*ing* is synonymous with the complex process that some philosophers and many theorists call *human communication or communicating*. (p. 112)

Although he is not a phenomenologist, Bakhtin (1986) also criticizes the current conceptions of language as "totalizing theories." He insists that any philosophy of language must begin from the recognition that its subject matter is not an abstract system, because "language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity" (p. 60). In other words, we always have to examine how people actually use language to grasp the nature of language, because any kind of analysis of language-as-system cannot describe sufficiently the element that gives language its ability to create effects in the world. An analysis of either the word or the sentence can mean nothing until they enter into communicative interaction among the different dialogic interchanges of public life. As Thomas Kent (1991) points out, "Bakhtin moves beyond the idea of language-as-system by locating the most fundamental element of communicative interaction within

these dialogic interchanges, and he calls this element the 'utterance' " (p. 286). Kent continues:

> By emphasizing the intentional role of the speaker, totalizing theories, grounded in conceptions of the word or the sentence, theories like Noam Chomsky's generative grammar or John Searle's speech acts, pay only lip service to the other, and by deemphasizing or sometimes simply ignoring the crucial importance of the other in our own individual use of language, these totalizing theories cannot escape the realm of theoretical abstraction to tell us anything concrete about how language actually communicates, how it responds to the other, how it engenders new relations with other communicants, or how it creates effects in the world. (p. 286)

So far I have introduced some of the alternative understandings of language (mostly Heideggerian ideas, with some supplemental explanations from Gadamer and Bakhtin). Through this discussion we can identify two major factors that are shared among these renowned scholars. First of all, they all renounce the technical-rationalistic account of language. Language is significant for human beings not so much for being just an instrument of exchanging thoughts, but more for being the very condition of human living and the manifestation of human Being. Second, language as having a more profound relation to human existence should be approached in the context of living situation and in the way that we actually experience it. Treating language as an abstract sign system cannot account for its dynamic and dialogic nature.

With regard to this study, these two common grounds are the basis for the collection of experiential descriptions and the subsequent reflection.

Language and Thinking

Language speaks. It speaks by letting what it has to say be heard and seen to us. Through its speaking, language calls the things and the world into nearness. It renders each of them its proper being. Thus language appropriates us to itself and makes us remain committed to and within its being. We can never step out of it and look at it from somewhere else. In this sense, the human is not the master of language, which has been believed for a long time; rather, we are appropriated and bespoken by language, and thus language is truly our master. Consequently, we call language "the house of Being" (Heidegger 1982, p. 135).

Thus we now almost overcome the narrow and instrumental conception of language. Yet one more thing is left: the relationship between language and thinking. Because we just renounce the conception of language that regards it as merely an instrument, especially in the service of thinking, the basic relationship between language and thinking should be established in a different way. This conception is based on the assumption that language and thinking can be separated into two different things. Unless we presuppose a clear distinction between the two, we cannot conceive of such a relationship in which one serves for another.

First of all, we acknowledged that speaking takes place not because we utter some language, but rather because we listen to the language and respond to what the language is saying to us. Language penetrates our Being, and we cannot separate

ourselves from the presence of language. Thus, Heidegger (1971) remarks, "Among all the appeals that we human beings, on our part, can help to be voiced, language is the highest and everywhere the first" (p. 146). If we conceive of language as just a means or an instrument, it not only looks down upon language as such, but also makes our whole existence being auxiliary to thinking. Of course, someone may object to this idea and say that thinking defines our Being. Yes, it is true. Thinking is the way that we exist in the world. However, does this not also affirm that language and thinking cannot be separated from each other and that the relationship between language and thinking is in no way that of an end and means? Thus, Merleau-Ponty (1974) argues, "To make of language a means or a code for thought is to break it" (p. 17).

Merleau-Ponty (1974) explains the relationship between language and thinking:

> Operative language makes us think, and living thought magically finds its words. There is not *thought* and *language*; upon examination each of the two orders splits in two and puts out a branch into the other. There is sensible speech, which is called thought, and abortive speech, which is called language. (p. 18)

We do not understand language because it is complete in itself, and there is no thought that is wholly thought and does not require words as the means of being present to itself. Thought anticipates language, and language expects thought. They continually take one another's place. All thought comes from spoken words and returns to them; every spoken word is born in thoughts and ends up in them. "Between men and within each

man there is an incredible growth of spoken words, whose nerve is 'thoughts'" (pp. 17-18).

This inseparable unity of language and thought again brings us into a different way of understanding about the expressive function of language. It takes place between thinking language and speaking thought, not between thought and language. Thus, expression is:

> a matter of reorganizing things-said, affecting them with a new index of curvature, and bending them to a certain enhancement of meaning. There was that which is of itself comprehensible and sayable—notably that which more mysteriously summons all things from the depths of language beforehand as nameable. There is that which is to be said, and which is as yet no more than a precise uneasiness in the world of things-said. Expression is a matter of acting in such a way that the two gather one another in or cross one another. (Merleau-Ponty, 1974, p. 19)

Therefore, the relationship among human being and language and thinking becomes much more complex and complicated. They cannot be separated from one another, and the existence of each depends on the other two. Language speaks in a correlation with our Being and thinking. Being manifests itself with an aid of language and thinking. Thinking takes place where our Being and language across. Again, language speaks. It says something to us as human beings, which, in turn, makes us think about some-thing in the world. It brings the world and things into nearness and thus makes them what they are. Language appropriates us so that we can appropriate

the world as our habitat. So we dwell in the world which comes to what it is in the threefold relationship among language and Being and thinking. Certainly, language is the house of Being, and the mode of Being is thinking. We think and we speak. Yet what we think and what we speak do not solely come from us. It is a blessing from the granting with which language and thought endow us. So *possession* is far from being appropriate to express our relation to language or thinking; rather, the proper term is *dwelling*. We dwell in language. Language is the house of Being. Thus, "that language is originarily human means at the same time that man's being-in-the-world is primordially linguistic" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 443).

Home and Abroad

We speak language not in the sense that we make use of it, but in such a way that lets our entire existence shelter within it. The place we shelter ourselves, we call home. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that we often compare our language to home. Language is also the source or origination of our Being and becomes our most intimate companion. The origin of my life is my mother, and we call our most intimate language the *mother tongue*. Therefore, our ordinary equation of mother's language with home has some fundamental truth in it.

Yet this truth is not always remembered, let alone cherished. Most people use the words *home* and *mother tongue* without giving much thought to them, and thus, in a way, they are taken for granted. Being taken for granted means in part that the very object functions very well in its own way; taken for granted in exactly those moments when it functions best, when its very effectiveness renders it invisible. As long as it works, there is no need for questioning, and thus there is no need of giving serious

thought to it. Without thinking, there is left only naturalization, homogenization, and automation. Where inertia dominates, there is little room for meaningful experience to be involved, and we often forget the real meaning of home and mother tongue. Only through breaking such habitual routine can it regain its significance.

Whether we want to or not, we may leave home and have to give up the language of home. Mobility is one of the fundamental characteristics of human beings, even if we cannot claim that it is our exclusive property against all other living creatures. We move from "accustomed here" to "unfamiliar there"; hence we do not always feel at home where we are. We feel unhappy and we look back. We move away from the language of our home and yearn for returning to the home of that particular language. Such is the case of foreign students, along with millions of exiles, refugees, and immigrants.

Home and mother tongue are the origin and the source of our existence. But the source moves about. We wonder, "Will ever our mother's language at home be able to withstand the mobility of the journey?" (Min-ha, 1994, p. 9) Yet it is not language that travels; it is "I" who moves here and there with the broken fragments of the source. Thus,

> Mother is the benevolent traveling source that, in fact, does not travel on her own. She is, rather, the transmitter of "a body full of sentences, proverbs and noises," and the originator of the "warm fabric of [his] memory" that "shelters and nourishes [him]." Like language, mother retains her secrets and

> it is through her son that she travels and continues to live on—albeit in fragments. (pp. 20-21)

Therefore, "here home" and "there abroad" do not signify a pure opposition. Rather, the relationship is that of a hybrid. Where is the home for the foreign students who left here home for there abroad? Here? There? Or everywhere? How does the hybrid of mother tongue and foreign language influence the traveling self? I seek clues, if not the rightful answer, in the next two chapters, which are dedicated to listening to the life stories of the foreign students who are themselves travelers.

CHAPTER 4:

LIVED EXPERIENCE OF STUDY ABROAD IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: TRAVEL THROUGH THE MAPPED REGION

Lived Experience of Place

> It's been said that people with a good memory don't remember anything because they don't forget anything: similarly, perhaps, the person with roots takes them for granted, while the person with no roots whatsoever is vividly aware of them, like some phantom ache in an amputated limb. (Hampton; as cited in Sarup, 1997, p. 96)

Experience of place is one of the essential and rudimentary dimensions of our human living. As Madan Sarup (1997) states, "We are born into relationships that are always based in a place. This form of primary and 'placeable' bonding is of quite fundamental human and natural importance" (p. 97). People have not only intellectual, imaginary, and symbolic conceptions of place, but also personal and social associations with place-based networks of interaction and affiliation (Buttimer, 1980, p. 167). They tend to ascribe many different levels of meaning to place: symbolic, emotional, cultural and political, and so on. "When the fundamental values associated with any of these levels of experience are threatened, then protest about the meaning of place may erupt" (Buttimer, 1980, p. 167).

Not Belonging Here

> I often feel that I am hovering over an amorphous space. I am not anchored in reality. Even though I am in a class and take part in a heated discussion, sometimes, I feel distant; like I am not here at all. Of course, when I took classes in my homeland, I did not concentrate all the time on the class activities. My mind often slipped into a daydreaming. But it was because, let's say, I was bored. I voluntarily let my mind float and wander around. And yet, I did not have a feeling that I am disconnected from the person next to me, the professor and the entire classroom. I was still completely saturated by the atmosphere of the class and even without any laborious effort, I could come back to the reality immediately. But here, it is quite a different story. I am trying very hard to catch every word spoken in the class, and even I don't have enough time to get bored. I am trying to be involved in the class activity as much as I can, and stick to the direction wherever the class goes. But still I can't be a part of the classroom. It's like . . . I don't belong here. (Cheol)[15]

What Cheol was talking about in the above anecdote is some kind of detached feeling from the entire environment surrounding him. Such feeling often comes from physical segregation. Sometimes a psychological and emotional exclusion from others also brings about the feeling of alienation. However, what if we are not alone and

---

[15] Cheol earned his master's degree in the US and is now working for his PhD degree. Although he seems to have no problem in communicating with others, he confesses that he still has problems because of the language differences between his mother tongue, Korean, and English.

actually have company? What if no one leaves us in the cold? Is there yet any time that we feel distant from others and things around us? Yes, there is, and that is the case of Cheol.

Although Cheol, unlike refugees or exiles, voluntarily left his homeland for Canada, his experience of "leaving home" and "changing places" also seems to include a fundamental sense of "loss." One significant loss is the sense of belonging. Foreign students like Cheol constantly experience a sense of being apart and being different from their surroundings. This sense of loss may trigger self-doubts and feelings of alienation. The question "Where am I?" is not just a lingering cliché in their mouths, but also a blunt menace to their existence.

Where do we belong? First and foremost, the sense of belonging comes from a place. We are surrounded literally by infinite space, but space is rather amorphous and intangible (Relph, 1976, p. 2). Space does not signify confinement, and thus the notion itself is always associated with some kind of freedom and openness. However, it does not yet give humans their identity and aura until it is experienced by them in a meaningful and organized way. Then it turns into a place. "Through experience meaningful places become visible and 'legible' in the blur of unfamiliar space" (Lynch; as cited in Platt, 1996, p. 114). Of course, this does not mean that space is less important than place for human beings. Rather, "space is variously experienced as the relative location of places, as the distances and expanses that separate or link places" (Tuan, 1977, p. 12). Therefore, the relationship between space and place are reciprocal; "space provides the context for places but derives its meaning from particular places" (Relph, 1976, p. 2).

The lived reciprocity of space and place is also confirmed by one of the fundamental human conditions: mobility. Movement and pause, security and adventure, territory and range—all of these experiences are related to human mobility. Even the word *experience* itself includes the meaning of "venturing forth into the unfamiliar and uncertain" (Tuan, 1977, p. 9). Through this venturing outward, our existence expands its horizon. We not only seek to be settled at a certain place, but also take the freedom to go out to an unknown space and see what is going on there. Thus, yearning for rooting oneself in a certain place and the desire to project one's self beyond the boundary of that particular place are both sides of the same Being, us.

The reciprocal relationship between space and place tells us that the sense of belonging and the longing for adventure do not signify a pure opposition. Healthy existence requires both: Without being firmly rooted in a place, venturing is nothing but a devastating force; and without trying to expand one' horizon of reach, the place turns into a mere prison. Therefore, the sense of belonging and the sense of freedom are the centripetal and the centrifugal force of human existence.

But, we may still wonder: In what ways, does human experience change amorphous space into a meaningful dwelling place? First of all, our senses lend a certain character to a place. For example, odor makes us discern different objects and places. Our sight helps us to identify unique appearances of things. Some kinds of sounds are familiar, but others are not. Touching is another way of exploring a physical world. Moving forward, backward, and sideways experientially differentiate one place from another. All of these sensory perceptions become a source of the identity of place. However, the identity of place is also founded on a relationship that we make with

significant others. Place is often associated with pleasant memories, intimate situations, shared values, and meanings. When we have warm and sympathetic relationships, the aura of the place becomes intimate. The opposite is also possible: Some places just give us a chill.

Language also involves making a place have a special meaning for human beings. Through communication, the experience of the place is exchanged and shared with others, giving the place a certain communal meaning. Hence the place becomes not only the platform of personal sentiments, but also a foundation of practicing "living together." The difference of accent and intonation also reminds us of different places. Sometimes a heavy local dialect makes us realize that we are home or in a completely strange land. The ways we name and speak of things make a difference in our perceptions of place too. In a way, each place has its own unique style of language; thus, belonging to a certain place also signifies acquiring the language of the place and getting used to it.

Therefore the basic meaning of place not only comes from fixed locations or geographical configurations, although they are all common and perhaps necessary aspects of places; but it is also in our relations to the place itself and the people within it, or even in the way we speak. Our experience of place reaches much deeper into the center of human existence than we usually expect it to do. Gabriel Marcel (as cited in Relph, 1976) summarizes this simply: "An individual is not distinct from his place; he is that place" (p. 43).

"Moving to another place" naturally causes a temporal disorientedness. Travel always comes first in a form of disorder, which causes a disturbance in the existence of

human beings and generates a sense of "not belonging here." Hence it is no wonder that foreign students commonly experience a sort of uprooted feeling. As we discussed above, however, not only does this annoying state of existence stem from the physical changes of locations, but the severed feeling also comes from the absence of the relationship that one has cherished or the deprivation of one's most intimate language that ties one's self to a place, a home; that is, one's mother tongue. Hence one becomes "living avatar of structuralist wisdom" in a foreign language; he/she cannot help knowing that "words are just themselves" (Hoffman, 1989, p. 107). Foreign words do not provide an automated association with the place and the things within it. Simply, foreign words do not hook on to anything; rather, they float in an uncertain space. Thus Hoffman (1989) believes that "this radical disjoining between word and thing is a desiccating alchemy, draining the world not only of significance but its colors, striations, nuances-its very existence. It is the loss of a living connection" (p. 107).

Becoming an Outsider

> Sometimes I am lost in class. Often in readings too. Simply I don't understand what's going on there. It is partially because I miss some amount of words spoken by the others or my vocabularies do not cover the whole text. But that's not all. Even when I heard every word and got some help from the dictionaries, there still remains a black hole in my comprehension. For example, when I read the word, "authentic," I don't really know what that exactly means. I cannot trace where the source or origin of the word is. Seems like it is not inside of me. When we talk about hockey, especially in a play-off season, I am often surprised to see how much Canadians invest

> themselves in that plain sport. To me it's just a game and nothing but one among many. I can never understand their passion toward hockey. So in every text that I read, every conversation that I join, somehow I feel being left behind. I am not included. I am just an outsider. (Seong)

Often foreign students identify themselves as outsiders. The place where they are now does not yet allow them to conceive of it as theirs. "Since it is not mine but someone else's, I do not belong here. I am, at best, a stranger here, or an obnoxious intruder at worst," lamentes Seong. Who then is an outsider? What does it mean to be outside?

The distinction between inside and outside is another important experiential dimension of space and place. Every place has a boundary or a border that distinguishes itself from less certain or less orderly space. However, this border is not always clear and tangible. Our experience of place does not confine itself within fixed locations, fenced territories, or established buildings. It is not only based on our faculty to recognize and distinguish a pattern in a physical and natural environment, but it is also founded on our ability to extrapolate beyond sensory evidence and create abstract space and imaginary place in our mind. Hence the border or the boundary that distinguishes one place from another is not so much in a division of physical appearances as in a differentiation of meanings that we assign to a certain place and another. Therefore, being an outsider means that one cannot share the meanings of place (or in place) with insiders.

Because language is the most important way of sharing meanings, the limitation of a foreign tongue makes it difficult for foreign students to easily settle into a new place or to feel included in that place. The foreign language cannot give them a significant center of their existence; it is only the backgrounds to activities that are often without sense and mere voids. "Being inside is knowing where you are" (Relph, 1976, p. 49). Without making sense of the place, without appreciating the language of the place, the meaningfulness of insideness never comes near to the sterile existence of outsiders. So they wonder, "When can I be a part here?" Yet "here" is where they are already.

Being on the Margin

> During the semester, I have been in a vulnerable position. All the time, I felt isolated and alienated, although no one in our class has overtly left me out in the cold or expressed a blunt hostility against me. The wall of language and culture has made my communication with others difficult. I have thought that they could not understand me, my personality and even my academic ability. I know this is a very irrational thought. I usually do not say a word during the class time. I seldom join in a coffee break chatting. How could they know about me? However, I cannot help but feel that I belong to a different kind, that is to say, minority; the people who are not at the center but on the margin. Let me take an example. In many classes, we had to work together as a group. However, I often sensed that many of my colleagues did not want me to be a member of their teams. I understand their worries, and yet, I cannot help but feel embarrassed. Although some classmates allowed

> me to participate in their group, it seems to me that they did not expect any valuable contribution on my part except being a human puppet that proves their "good will." At first, I tried to assert my opinion and put myself into the scene as much as possible. But, in no time, I have learned to keep silent, to make myself mute. Simply, I couldn't bear any more the feeling of being tolerated by others. Of course, tolerance is one of the enchanted virtues in the modern society. But it is the virtue that makes you satisfied when you exert it yourself to others. When you are being tolerated by someone, what you feel is not only the gratitude toward that person, but also the heavy burden on your shoulders and the scar in your pride. Am I a distorted person? I hope not. (Cha)

Virtually every human being and human group tends to regard its own place as the center of the world. This centeredness enables people to have a stabilized sense of belonging, being rooted and settled in that particular place. Thus, in a way, one's sense of place becomes a function of how well it provides a center for one's life interests (Buttimer, 1980, p. 171). However, this centeredness refers to rather a dynamic and creative process; it is an ongoing life process, like breathing in and out. The meanings of place to those who live inside (in other words, "insiders") have more to do with everyday living and doing rather than thinking (Buttimer, 1980, p. 171). Feeling as an outsider, Cha suffers from the loss of a significant life center, which frequently reminds him of his relative position: He is not at the center but on the margin.

> From the perspective outside, everything inside looks equally impenetrable, from below everything above equally forbidding. It takes the same bullish will to gain a foothold in some modest spot as to insist on entering some sacred inner sanctum, and that insistence, and ignorance, and obliviousness of the rules and social distinctions-not to speak of "your own place"—can land you anywhere at all. As a radically marginal person, you have two choices: to be intimidated by every situation, every social stratum, or to confront all of them with the same leveling vision, the same brash and stubborn spunk. (Hoffman, 1989, p. 157)

Often insiders consider foreign students so reserved: "They do not try to be involved in any matter!" However, some foreign students do not agree with this subtle blaming. One student says, "We are not indulged in irresponsible indifference. We are serious, almost too serious to do anything that Canadians can do without any pains or labors, and thus that they may do with a really indifferent attitude" (Zhang).[16] This seriousness of foreign students does not let them pass anything into the realm of taken-for-grantedness. Outsiders may think that the taken-for-granted routine of everyday life is somehow merciful; it prevents one from being embarrassed in almost every situation. Hence trap is in either side: Insiders may be so immersed in the particulars of everyday life and action that they can see no point in questioning the taken-for-granted. Outsiders

---

[16] Zhang came from China and just finished his doctoral degree. He became a permanent resident two years ago and is now trying to settle in Canada. Thus, achieving a certain level of fluency in English has become the most important task for him.

struggle with the burden of reckless and ceaseless questioning, and thus nothing comes and goes easy. Life in a new language is so restless for foreign students.

Lived Experience of Time

Time is another important dimension of human experience. However, what we are referring to as time here is not only objective time: the time of clocks and calendars. Such time can be good to measure or gauge how long a worldly process or an event takes, in such a way that we can all agree upon it. But from an experiential standpoint, there is another type of time: lived time as subjective time. Such time can differ from person to person according to how much meaning they invest in that particular object or event. Even the same person can experience the same event differently, according to the change in his general mood or circumstances. For example, when we are involved in a heated discussion, time literally flies. But when we listen to a boring lecture, time slows down. When we compare Monday morning's three-hour-seminar to Friday evening's class of the same length, we may encounter experiential differences between them. We cannot measure lived time in the same way that we do objective time, but from the experiential point of view, it is not only real but also quite helpful to understand the meaningful human world.

> I can't afford to look back, and I can't figure out how to look forward. In both directions, I may see a Medusa, and I already feel the danger of being turned into stone. Betwixt and between, I am stuck and time is stuck within me. Time used to open out, serene, shimmering with promise. If I wanted to hold a moment still, it was because I wanted to expand it, to get its fill. Now,

> time has no dimension, no extension backward or forward. I arrest the past, and I hold myself stiffly against the future; I want to stop the flow. As a punishment, I exist in the stasis of a perpetual present, that other side of "living in the present," which is not eternity but a prison. I can't throw a bridge between the present and the past, and therefore I can't make time move. (Hoffman, 1989, pp. 116-117)

"The temporal dimensions of past, present, and future constitute the horizons of a person's temporal landscape" (van Manen, 2001a, p. 45). The experience of dislocation as well as the feeling of loss and alienation gives foreign students a certain perspective on the past, present, and future. The past becomes idealized, the present is constantly examined, and the future comes without anticipation. However, the most outstanding problem is that foreign students frequently feel that the past, present, and future have lost their living connection with one another. The relationship between the past, present, and future is not a one-dimensional continuum, which assumes that they refer only to an order or a sequence of any event or a process. Of course, the past serves the present, and the present becomes the foundation of things and events yet to come. However, van Manen points out:

> And yet, it is true too that the past changes under the pressures and influences of the present. As I make something of myself I may reinterpret who I once was or who I now am. The past changes itself, because we live toward a future which we already see taking shape, or the shape of which we suspect as a yet secret mystery of experiences that lie in store for us.

> Through hopes and expectations we have a perspective on life to come, or through desperation and lack of will to live we may have lost such perspective. (p. 45)

Although we do not always consciously recognize the three-fold relationships among past, present, and future, our experience of time, at a more fundamental level, denies conceiving them as in a one-sided chain of cause and effect. Living in the present always coincides with the memory of the past and the anticipation of the future, and thus the lost connection among them makes foreign students doubt their whole existence. They try to look back, but the petrified past does not help them to understand their present living. They try to look forward, but without figuring out the present, the future does not come with hope.

The Unacceptable Present

> I was an eloquent speaker and capable writer at home. There is an aphorism in my country, which says, "Never judge a person according to his appearance or speech." But another proverb says, "The most important standards to appraise a person are his body, his speech, his writing and finally, his judgment." Although I believe in the truthfulness of the first aphorism, I have been proud of my ability to speak with fluency and to write with confidence. However, since I came to Canada, I lost not only the eloquence in my speech and writing but also the source of my self-pride. Whenever I speak something with a broken English, my sense of dignity subsides. Whenever I make a mistake because I misunderstand someone's

> speech, my self-esteem recedes. It is really difficult for me to accept the current "I." It is definitely remorseful for me to say it to myself, over and over, like chanting a spell, that "I am more than that." (Cha)

For many foreign students like Cha, the present often brings utter confusion. They simply do not understand what they have become: "I was somebody in my homeland, but here, I am nobody." Most foreign graduate students have a very high level of self-esteem, although the source of this pride may vary. However, one important aspect is that their competence has something to do with the ability to understand things about themselves and their surroundings and to effectively communicate what they understand with others. Hence their self-pride, to a great extent, comes from their ability to interpret, comprehend, and have a good command of language. However, a foreign language makes them frustrated; it not only deprives their eloquence, but also obstructs the basic understanding of the current. The question "What am I doing now?" persists and never stops.

For foreign students the present becomes a symbol of loss. Loss always accompanies a certain effort of redemption. However, what do they want to recover? In other words, what did they lose in the first place? Did they actually lose their language, whether mother tongue or whatever? Did they sincerely believe that their ability to think, feel, and understand suddenly vanished? Foreign students cannot help but answer these questions, "Not really." Often native speakers encourage foreign students by saying, "Why bother? Now you can speak two languages. Instead of losing one, you just gained another." Is this encouraging remark accurate? Foreign students may nod,

but there is still something missing, and the feeling of loss yet prevails. For they somehow know that the foreign language is not just a bonus or an ornament, which implies a subsidiary or a secondary order. Rather, the foreign language is now primary in their understanding of the present, because their current experience is recognizable without breaking its wholeness or totality, only with the aid of that foreign tongue. As van Manen (1997b) asserts, "Language has implications for our experiential possibilities and lets us know what is experienceable" (p. xiii). The opposite is also true: We can understand our experiences only to the extent that language lets us recognize them. Broken English not only signifies a deficit in a certain function, but it also implies an impediment in understanding the current life, a fissure in their comprehension of the present.

"I am more than what this thin present defines," says Cha. But what is "more," and where can we find it? The natural order of things is to look back, to try to return to the point that I was that more. However, can we use the past to fill what is missing in the present? Besides, if we do not have a clear idea of what we are missing in the present, what can we possibly do to regain it?

The Fossilized Past

> In a way I live in the past, in what I left behind. Of course, my past is not perfect at all and it's not like a Golden age. There were things that I regret to remember. There were times that I want to erase and forget. But, at that time, my life was a whole, or at least I felt that way. As most young people do, my life then was steering toward the future with a full of ambition and hope.

> Life was a promise to be fulfilled sooner or later. However, now its direction has been reversed. Instead of being driven by dreams of the future, my still young life is plunged into the swamp of nostalgia, longing for what I lost—the time when I was a whole, the time when my speech and listening were not fragmented but united inside me, and the time when I kept a faith in me and the future to come. (Seo)[17]

All that we are now, we owe to the past. The past is the origin of our present beings and becomes an important source of our identity, who and what we are now. We cherish where we came from, and thus we may attach special sentiments and meanings to our past. Hence, forgetting one's past is often condemned as forfeiting one's roots, and nostalgia becomes one of the most enchanted sentiments in poetries and literatures. But what is nostalgia anyway? The general definition of the word is that it is a "longing for past times and places" (*Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus*, 2002). Its Greek etymology (*nostos*, return home, + *algos*, pain) indicates that it is a sort of homesickness, when we are on foreign soil (*Si-sa Elite English-Korean Dictionary*, 1994). In a nutshell, nostalgia signifies a "longing for home," and it is in this very sense that the notion has something to do with both spatial and the temporal experience of foreign students.

People look back for various reasons, but one thing shared by all is that their present life does not provide them with a safe refugee. Tuan (1977) observes:

---

[17] Seo came from Korea two years ago. She is now suffering from severe homesickness and desperately wants to return home.

> In general, we may say that whenever a person (young or old) feels that the world is changing too rapidly, his characteristic response is to evoke an idealized and stable past. On the other hand, when a person feels that he himself is directing the change and in control of affairs of importance to him, then nostalgia has no place in his life: action rather than momentous of the past will support his sense of identity. (p. 188)

Hence nostalgia itself intrudes into the chasm of the present life when we lose sight of where we are now and lose control of where we are heading. It may provide us with a certain amount of comfort, and often looking back significantly contributes to regaining control of our present life. Likewise, many foreign students try to look back to fill the hole in their present life and to make sense of it once again. However, there is also a peril in this desperate trial of redemption. For remembering the past is an act already constituted in the present. Memory is creative; we do not recall the past as it was, and thus our memory of the past is, in a way, never truly the past. "The past exists as it is reconstructed, remembered, and responded to. In other words, the past, ironically perhaps, exists in the present as we construct it in remembrance" (Tauber, 1996, p. 163). Therefore when we return to the past, our purpose is not to attach ourselves to a certain point where the current loss can be compensated, but to capture it in the present and to make it a clue in discovering where we are now and who we have become.

Time flows; the flowing of time is its virtue. We can live not only in the present, but also in the past and the future all together, thanks to its movement forward and

backward. The usual direction of time is its movement forward. However, nostalgia changes the intention of our temporal experience: It not only moves us backward, but also makes us sojourn in an irrevocable past. After all, nostalgia is switched on when we lose something important, and the loss is a magical preserver. It severs time from its usual stream just like a snapshot captures a certain moment. But, just as the snapshot is not the entire record of the event, the severed time is not at all equal with what we have gone through in our past. When we cling to the past, time may lose its virtue; and when it loses its movement, we may be stagnant in eternity. Nostalgia perhaps gives foreign students temporary relief; however, the strenuous task to figure out the present still remains. For I am what I am in the present.

The Future Without Guarantee

> I am really anxious about my future. I have been living and studying in Canada for almost five years. I still feel that I do not belong here and English does not yet penetrate into my deepest psychic core. Of course, the situation has gotten much better, when I compare now to the time of my first arrival here. But I have to face another problem then. The more I become familiar with Canada and the more fluently I can speak English, the farther my homeland and mother language is getting away. For example, when I meet my fellow Koreans, I cannot help but realize that my Korean vocabularies have been dramatically diminished. I began to use English words and Korean words almost half and half in my speech. What is worse, I often make a really messy sentence because I arrange the words like English. I am worrying about the hybridism that I've become. Can I live here? I don't

> think so. Can I go back to my homeland? I am afraid. In a sense, I am stuck here and now, and I don't know where the fate will take me. (Seo)

After spending a few years in a foreign country, foreign students may become familiar with some of the things and people in their host country. Seo can no longer smell an exotic scent when she inhales. The sizes and shapes of buildings and houses no longer make her feel strange. Different colors of skin, accents, or gestures might not attract her attention now. She is no longer lost among avenues and streets and no longer fears going to restaurants and malls. Yet, she is constantly looking somewhere else. She always dreams about returning home, which is not here and now, but far away and, in a sense, long ago. "Someday I will go back to my country, my home."

Hence, for many foreign students like Seo, the future often comes with a somewhat unusual meaning—"return," a return to the place where they once belonged and a time when they felt integrated within themselves. However, foreign students themselves know very well that this dream of "return to the original" is impossible. Whether they wanted it or not, they have been changed. Whether it is good or bad, they have become sort of a crossbreed between home and abroad and between the mother's language and the foreign tongue. Home may not welcome their return; the return may not strip the disturbing label of "stranger" from them. Their mother tongue may not be enough for them to pour out who they have become. Then just imagine what it is like to become a stranger once again even in one's own home!

For foreign students, the future may arrive without anticipation. It simply denies their grasp of what it might be like. Of course, the future is marked by uncertainty, and

thus our vision of the future may go unrealized in many cases or, more often than not, turn into nightmares. However, this does not mean that the future is always unreliable or unpredictable. No matter how crude it may be, a vision or anticipation of the future teaches us how to live the moment in the present. Without it, our life has no direction and thus does not expand itself. Although we can never completely control the future, we are not the kind of being that helplessly drifts about, leaving everything at the mercy of the flow of time. Rather, the future is what we shape by meaningfully living now. Overwhelmed by the loss of the past glory and embarrassed by the incomprehensibility of the present life, foreign students cannot think and dream about their future. Here and now, they do not belong. There and then will never come again. What might the future be like for foreign students? In the end, only time will tell.

Lived Experience of Body

We live in the world. This original situatedness in the world is the most fundamental fact of our life. The basic human condition of "being-in-the-world" is realized, first and foremost, in and through our bodies. We are always bodily in the world, and thus all of our experiences are founded upon this corporeal condition of human existence. Therefore, Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues that the fundamental basis of all human understanding is a matter of being-in-the-world and of getting a grasp of the world throw the flow of experiences that are bodily anchored.

"Understanding the world and ourselves can be described as giving meaning to the situation" (Stelter, 2000, p. 63). In this sense a theory of meaning is always a theory of understanding, and vice versa. Meaning-giving activity as the basis of our understanding is, thus, founded on the fact that we have a body. "By embodying the

world around us or by interiorizing the environment, things become meaningful" (Stelter, 2000, p. 66). Arnold (1973) explains:

> Our body is the ultimate instrument of all our external knowledge, whether intellectual or practical. When we learn to use a language or a tool for example, we make ourselves aware of these things as we are our body; they become, as it were, extensions of our bodily equipment and indications of what it is to be intelligent. (p. 117)

Hence, "lived body" becomes another important theme in exploring foreign students' lifeworld experiences. I will focus on foreign students' bodily perceptions and understanding of themselves and the environment through their bodily existence.

Ceaseless Tension

> For me, study with English language, which is not my mother tongue, is somewhat painful. After finishing a class, I usually feel like all my energy is entirely drained. I really become exhausted and burned out. I have to take deep breaths repeatedly. Just sigh and sigh and sigh, as if I have talked too much. (Even though I actually did not say a word!) My neck is stiffened and my eyelids turn into hundreds of tons. Sometimes I feel as if I have a headache. I smell something stinky in my throat. I do not know why, but I have to concentrate all my energy on listening and following the class in English. Maybe a three hour session is not that long for my Canadian

> colleagues, but to me, it is much too long. After spending three hours in class, I feel like I have gone through a whole day's hard work. (Cheol)

Physical or mental distress is a commonly experienced phenomenon among many foreign students. Not only is the burden of foreign language associated with psychological depression or mental estrangement, but it also brings about a chronic sense of fatigue and exhaustion. Here, whether or not the sense of pain is well grounded in human physiology or psychology is not that important. No matter how vague, the physical complaint is one part of foreign students' lived experience of study in a foreign land, and thus it is worth considering.

When we read a book or engage in a conversation, we usually do not attend to all the words written or said, as if our understanding solely depends on deciphering each and every word in that sentence or statement. At some point we pay a great deal of attention to them, but at others we may just let them pass unnoticed. Yet, we can understand what is going on there. Such understanding, however, does not come because the passage or the statement is complete by itself and we decrypt it correctly. Rather, "words make thoughts arouse and put responses on our lips even we did not know we were capable of, teaching us our own thought" (Merleau-Ponty, 1974, p. 17). Hence we may say that reading or conversation has "a spirit of its own" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 383).

However, for many foreign students, each and every word, whether in a dialogue or in reading, becomes the code that they must break. There is always a fear or anxiety that they might miss some words that may be the key element to understanding

not only that particular sentence, but also the entire text or the whole situation and even the intention of the speaker/author. In living situations, conversation or reading somehow lets us know which is the important part and the highlight and which is the shade and the background, giving us a clue as to where we should pay more attention and where we can rest.

In a foreign language this seemingly natural ability does not function very well. Reading or conversation becomes a somewhat serious and strenuous task. In order not to miss a word, foreign students have to keep their attention at a pretty heightened level all the time. As a result, there is no such thing as "small talk" for foreign students because even a casual chat becomes a demanding job that requires constant interpretation and analysis. This may cause ceaseless tension, and thus, even without saying a word in class, foreign students often feel entirely exhausted.

They also feel this intense strain when they speak. In living speech we are not concerned about grammar and structure or our voice and accent; we just speak and let others know what we are thinking. Of course, this does not mean that the way we speak is only a trivial matter. Without using words properly, what we are saying may be heard as just nonsense. With adequate volume, pitch, and timely stress, our speech may gain more resonating power. Yet, all these are secondary. What is more important in speech is what we are saying or what we are revealing as our thoughts. Good speech does not always sound beautiful or magnificent. The more we are absorbed in our speaking, the less we are interested in adorning the words or enhancing our voices. According to Gadamer (as cited in Winning, 1991):

> The actual operation of language lets grammar vanish entirely behind what is said in it at any given time. . . . The more language is a living operation, the less we are aware of it. Thus it follows from the self-forgetfulness of language that its real being consists in what is said in it. (p. 65)

For foreign students this natural way of speaking does not go smoothly. They always worry about how their speaking sounds and whether or not the arrangement of their words is appropriate. One thing that is different here is that they do this, not for ornamenting their speech, but for basic communication.

> When the native speakers are saying something, it's like I am listening to a music. There is certainly a rhythm and melody there. I am trying to imitate it as much as possible. However, I can hear only a cacophony through my uncooperative throat. For the first time, I realized my voice is that much ugly. (Jung).

While they laboriously prepare for a speech, its living quality may disappear, leaving an artificial sound and an incomprehensible message. "Pardon me?" once is enough; twice is too much; three times is when you get exhausted.

Lost Spontaneity of Response

> I don't think I've had many opportunities to converse with others in English. What I mean is a real conversation, not a chatting or any other sort of small talk. Of course, conversation does not need to be heavy or serious all the time. However, I think, a real conversation, at least, should make me feel

> that I can understand my counterpart (not only what he says but also who he is) and I can be understood by the same token. And here is my problem. Because English is not my language, I have to form entire sentences before uttering them. Otherwise I easily get lost in the middle. But in this laborious moment, I already miss the streaming of conversation and quickness of response. No one can understand like I do how important a second is in a real conversation. My Canadian colleagues often call me "thoughtful." But I know that's not always a compliment. It's also a humble expression of how difficult to converse with me on their parts. (Guo)

Living conversation has its own life. It does not always follow the line we have previously planned. "Our spoken words often surprise us and teach us our own thought" (Merleau-Ponty, 1974, p. 85) and thus change the direction of the conversation according to the development of our thinking. But conversation is different from monologue. It is not only for displaying what we are thinking, but also for listening to what others are thinking, exchanging our view with theirs, and seeking more advanced understanding together. Such mutual exchange plays a significant role in a genuine conversation. Thus, an authentic conversation requires that both speakers pay due respect and properly and sincerely respond to each other. To do this, we have to understand not only what the other is talking about, but also who that person is. A good conversation helps us to come up with a better understanding of a certain topic. It also gives us a chance to know better the person with whom we are talking.

We tend to measure how successful our conversation is by our counterparts' immediate responses or reactions. We read what they are thinking not only by what they have said, but also through their gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, pace of the speech, and so forth. A certain glow in their faces makes us believe that they are convinced or very confident at that moment. If they slightly raise their eyebrows, we may think that they disagree. However, foreign students are notorious for maintaining a "poker face":

> The mobility of my face comes from the mobility of the words coming to the surface the feelings that drive them. Its vividness is sparked by the locking of an answering gaze, by the quickness of understanding. But now I can't feel how my face lights up from inside; I don't receive from others the reflected movements of its expressions, its living speech. People look past me as we speak. (Hoffman, 1989, p. 147)

Busily searching for proper words and deciding what to say next, foreign students somehow distance themselves from the context of the conversation. This way of speaking, of "choosing" the right words to say, implies a reflective approach to language, an approach that involves suspension from immediate involvement in the interaction (Winning, 1991, p. 144). In this withdrawing from the immediacy of the situation, uncomfortableness may grow between foreign students and their partners in conversation, and the mutual exchange of thinking that marks a genuine conversation may be hindered. Perhaps thoughtfully prepared speech prevents foreign students from getting lost in the middle of a conversation; however, being lost for a moment or

making a slip of the tongue is a natural part of conversation. Thus Merleau-Ponty (1973) says, "As soon as speech gets hold of it, as soon as it comes alive, the best-reasoned artificial language becomes irregular and full of exceptions" (p. 36).

Therefore, in a way, true conversation occurs when speaking becomes "thoughtless"—thoughtless not because it does not require thought, but because the thought is an incorporated in-tuneness with the dialogic situation (Winning, 1991, p. 145). In this sense the perfection or real mastery of language does not stem from speaking a flawless statement or enunciating a perfect sound. Rather, it comes from "allowing for free streaming of speech, for those bursts of spontaneity, the quickness of response" (Hoffman, 1989, p. 118). While constantly preparing for flawless speech, foreign students often lose spontaneity in their responses and thus fail to catch the natural flow of the conversation.

"I became the person who laughs at a joke whose bursting power is already long gone away. I may be the last person who will leave the door, still puzzling what's going on, when a fire alarm sets off" (Zhang). Because there is always a lag in their understanding of what others are talking about, foreign students cannot respond quickly. Not only does this mean a verbal delay in dialogue, but it is also a constraint in appropriate and timely action on their part. When someone grieves for the loss of a loved one, what we have to do is to console and soothe him/her by sharing the grief. Sincerely expressed condolence might mitigate the pain, but how can one express true sympathy if the language that he/she must use is not in him/her? Stunned by the immobility of the foreign tongue, foreign students are often embarrassed by not knowing how to behave and how to act, let alone what to say and how to say it.

Awfully delayed, foreign students' actions may lose their adequacy and punctuality. A late response, whether it is toward a hilarious joke or an honest question, makes foreign students look dull, odd, or sometimes rude to others, but mostly to themselves. The lack of language not only means a shortage or a deficiency in communication, but also brings about an inadequacy and inappropriateness of one's action.

I Am Nobody; I Have No-Body

> Because I can't express who I am or what I am in English, I often feel that I am not seen and I am not heard here. Once I met one of my former classmates. "Hi. How are you?" I greeted him. "I . . . am . . . fine, thank you. And how are you?" He greeted me back, yet with a somewhat perplexed look. 'Oh, I got it. He must have forgotten my name. That's not an unusual thing!' I thoughtfully and generously disclosed my name. "Just in case, my name is . . ." But I could notice a still suspicious look in his face. "Remember? We took the same class two years ago." Then he looked like a little bit relieved, but not completely convinced. What he does not remember is not only my name. It seems that in his memory, I don't exist. This incident may illustrate what I am here. I am just nobody; anybody that could be simply forgotten. (Cha)

> My words often seem to baffle others. They are inappropriate, or forced, or just plain incomprehensible. People look at me with puzzlement; they mumble something in response—something that doesn't hit home. Anyway, the back and forth of conversation is different here. People often don't

> answer each other. But the mat look in their eyes as they listen to me cancels my face, flattens my features. . . . People look past me as we speak. What do I look like, here? Imperceptible, I think; impalpable, neutral, faceless. (Hoffman, 1989, p. 147)

Foreign students are the people who may be easily spotted in class. Their exotic appearance alone is enough to attract people's attention. Their foreign accent may make others aware that there is someone different here. However, such attention does not necessarily go beyond a moment of curiosity. Because of the language deficiency, foreign students seem to have a somewhat passive attitude in class. They are seldom involved in a discussion; they rarely raise questions. In a group activity they usually avoid being a leader. Of course, this seclusion not only comes from their voluntary withdrawal, but also from people who are not patient, considerate, and sympathetic. Foreign students' uncertain and broken speech is often disregarded as if their thoughts do not matter and their presence is not of importance.

> Your speech, fascinating as it might be on account of its very strangeness, will be of no consequence, will have no effect, will cause no improvement in the image or reputation of those you are conversing with. One will listen to you only in absent-minded, amused fashion, and one will forget you in order to go on with serious matters. (Kristeva, 1991, p. 20)

Somehow foreign students are not being heard and seen. In spite of their physical presence, their existence is not always acknowledged by others. In a way, the stock phrase "I am nobody" also means "I have no body."

When do we come to know what we look like? Perhaps it is when someone gazes at us and gives a clue of his/her appreciation or disappointment or disgust. However, the recognition of one's appearance does not always come from physical shape or figure. The elegance of one's behavior makes us appreciate him/her as a beautiful person. The gracelessness of one's speech makes us despise him/her as an ugly figure. The limitations of a foreign tongue deprive foreign students of the opportunity to reveal who they are and what they think. As a result, their faces are emotionless, although complicated, multifarious emotions constantly run through in their minds. Their broken speech can be heard monotonous, and its ineptness can negate the passion that they feel about the words that they are uttering. Most of all, they became ghost-like creatures; they are faceless, impalpable. What do they look like here? Sadly, no one else cares.

Lived Experience of Self and Others

"Moving into another language is always a threat to the experience of one's identity" (Roth & Harama, 2000, p. 763). The Latin root *idem* (same) shows that the notion of identity primarily signifies something as the same, something persistent, and something not susceptible to change. Citing Thesen, Roth and Harama (2000) suggests, "Although in academic circles the notion of identity as emerging from interactions and re/attributed to the individuals is understood, a fixed conception of identity remains as the non-articulated premise of daily life, including schooling" (p. 758).

Hence in ordinary conception, identity refers to a fixed trait or a persistent facet of the personality of an individual that is not influenced much by the ever-changing environment. However, this immutable and continuing identity is rather a myth. I am not the same person that I was in the past. Who I am here is not identical to who I am there. Between now and then, here and there, our identity collides, crashes, and discontinues. The only continuity in identity is that it changes ceaselessly. Therefore, in a way, identity is a product of articulation, not of discovery; "it lies at the intersection of dwelling and traveling and is a claim of continuity within discontinuity" (Min-ha, 1994, p. 14).

At the same time, identity is largely constituted through the process of othering. Ryckmans (1996) draws a provoking analogy:

> Dictators and toddlers share a curious characteristic: an inability to use the first person pronoun. They refer to themselves by their own names, in the third person. For instance, instead of saying "I want an ice-cream," a small child will say: "Jimmy wants an ice-cream." Or a great General narrating his victorious campaigns does not write: "I led my troops into battle" but "Caesar led his troops into battle." (p. 49)

According to Ryckmans, at least in the case of children, the mental process that enables them to progress and eventually to adopt the first-person pronoun is directly related to their ability to appreciate the reality of a second person. "In other words, a child must first discover *you* before he becomes able to say *I*" (p. 49). He continues:

> This reflects a fundamental truth: without *you*, I cannot be. It is only after an individual becomes aware of the existence of others *as others* (distinct from himself), that he discovers his own identity. Self-awareness is the outcome of a perception of "otherness." (pp. 49-50)

Therefore, identity grows out of the recognition of others and their otherness. "Nevertheless, the other is not I and on that account differences must arise" (Merleau-Ponty, 1973b, p. 134). Facing enormous and overwhelming linguistic and cultural differences, the identity of foreign students fluctuates and conflicts. However, out of chaos, articulation and reconfiguration occur. According to Min-ha (1994):

> The boundaries of identity and difference are continually repositioned in relation to varying points of reference. The meanings of here and there, home and abroad, third and first, margin and center keep on being displaced according to how one positions oneself. (p. 20)

In the next section I will explore how foreign students position themselves in the ambiguous space caused by linguistic dispossession and how they relate themselves to others in that uncertain space. Perhaps we saw much of this in previous sections. For the experiences of space, time and body are essential aspects that eventually constitute our selves.

Deprived Sense of Self or Self-Discovery?

> When I was in Korea, people often admired me as an eloquent speaker and I was really proud of that. In all classes I had taken, I was an excellent student.

> I was fully confident of expressing my opinion in front of others. I enjoyed discussion with others and preferred taking charge in conversation. Even without any preparation, I could do an improvisational presentation in class. Everything turned into a wonderful argument once I put it in my words. I had a talent that everyone envied. As a matter of fact, I was so good!
>
> However, things changed. Now I am feeling that I have become an idiot and a really, really dumb person. Instead of taking initiative during class, all I can do is just listening and following what others are saying. Sometimes, I do not say a word. No, actually I cannot say anything. Even though I can hide myself behind others on the excuse that now I am using a foreign language, not my native language, however I can't hide myself from my deprived sense of self. I am the same person that I was. Certainly this is me, but at the same time, this is not the "me" that I have ever known before. Then, who am I? (Cheol)

When do we think of our-selves? When things are going well and thus we are not experiencing any kind of rupture, we usually do not think of our-selves. In some sense we live in the middle of "taken-for-grantedness." In this taken-for-grantedness, we hardly question our-selves, even less than we question others. However, the experience of study in a foreign language brings about a fundamental rupture in our existence that breaks down our taken-for-grantedness and makes us wonder who we really are.

> Like standing in front of a mirror, one notices a lot of things of oneself which one did not see before. A recognition of "me" occurs. This "me" is not the "self" one is familiar with. I am not only a stranger to others, but also becoming a stranger to myself. (Zhou Wu, 2004)

Certainly, in the experience of study in a foreign language, we have to face a different "me" that has not been known to us before. However, this is not at all a pleasant discovery of ourselves. It deprives us of our proud memories; it confronts our vulnerability. Not only do we perceive ourselves as a different version of the same self, but we also witnesse the weak, dark, and inferior side of ourselves. By entering into another language, we become alienated from ourselves, but at the same time we come to meet the other side of ourselves. It is as though we find something that we never want to find. Here lies agony, and we cannot hide ourselves anywhere from such a fundamental realization of our vulnerability.

Being a Foreigner

> I am here, sitting in a classroom surrounded by foreigners. No, that's not true. Rather, in this class, I am a foreigner, a stranger who has a different color, different nationality, different culture, and especially, a different language. They (my classmates) are constantly talking, asking, joking, and chatting about something. They are engaging in a conversation, which means "everything" in this class. For this is a phenomenology course, which is supposed to deal with "the lived experience." I have to listen carefully to what they are talking about in order to understand their lived experience. I

> have to express my own lived experience to them so as to broaden their horizons of understanding. This course is supposed to run through this kind of mutual exchanges of lived experience. But I can't. I can't put myself into the stream of such mutual exchanges, because I have a different language and I am not yet proficient in English. Sometimes, I can hardly follow the pace of their speech. This makes me miss many details of their stories. At the same time, I can't organize what I'm thinking in their language with the appropriate grammar and proper words. This also makes me omit many details of my stories. I am afraid that I might be misunderstood by them and I am afraid that I might misunderstand them. (Seo)

We usually think of things only in terms of our own position. Even though we acknowledge that the human being is not perfect at all, and thus our own judgment may have some defects, we still have a tendency to think, judge, and measure everything and everyone by only our own standards, without seriously considering those of others. In other words, whether it is conscious or unconscious, we have a tendency to think of ourselves as the center of the world. We may call this tendency *egocentrism*.

Egocentrism works very well in "sameness" without causing any doubt or a problem. If I am surrounded by people who are the same as I am, who use the same language that I use, who belong to the same culture that I do, it is very difficult for me to identify different standards from mine and to realize that difference has meaning. I see only what I want to see; I hear only what I want to hear.

However, the experience of being a foreigner in the class shatters such ego-centered tendencies. This experience contains a certain realization, that of "difference." I am different from others in terms of almost everything. We have many differences, rather than sameness. Does this mean that we belong to different worlds? They are the center of their worlds just as I am the center of my world. Then, where am I now? Their world? My world? Who is the center of "this world"? Are they? Or am I?

Such confusion does not take too long to reveal an answer. It looks as though I am in their world instead of being in my world. Despite my physical presence, this world is not for me but for them. It seems to me that I am standing on the margin of their world. This realization makes me sad because I cannot give up thinking that I should be the center of this world. This ego-centered attitude makes me angry because I want them to become adjusted to my way of doing, instead of having to adjust myself to their way. Such naïve ego-centeredness makes me solicitous, because I know unquestionably that I am a foreigner.

Being a Child Again

> It looks like I became a child again. Just like a child, I am stammering, stuttering every time, everywhere. Something wrong slips out of my mouth, but there is no way for me to get it under control. Just like a child, I am helpless. I am living with fear of being punished for not being able to speak correctly, just like a child. However, I am an adult and I don't like this. I wish I could be just a child. (Jinn)

Some language scholars suggest the investigation of children's experience of learning a language to find a modality for second-language acquisition. There might be various similarities between these two ways of being. Indeed, living and studying in a foreign land requires facing the difficulties of functioning as an adult while feeling like a child in a society where things work differently (Wagner & Magistrale, 1995, p. x). As a foreigner who tries to speak in a language that is foreign to me, not only do I often feel that I have become a child again, but I am also treated as if I am a child. When someone talks to me, his/her voice becomes higher than usual; people tend to bend their bodies toward me as much as possible; they try to slow down their speech, frequently asking me whether I can or cannot understand what they are saying. When I say something, they pretend to understand what I say, even though they do not understand at all what I have said. They are afraid of hurting my feelings, just like they are afraid of hurting a vulnerable child's feelings. When I do something in class, they pay me somewhat exaggerated compliments just as they would cheer up a small child. Why do they treat me like this? In what ways do they perceive a child in me?

When children are learning a language, they may experience frustration. They cannot speak a perfect sentence or find the proper word. Something wrong frequently slips out of their mouths. Even though they know the meaning of a word, they usually do not know that this meaning can have a somewhat different nuance according to the context. This all may make them feel afraid, frustrated, and angry with themselves as well as with others. That is exactly the feeling that a person who is studying in a foreign language has.

However, there is a fact that we cannot deny: We are adults, not children. It is not a matter of how others treat you. You cannot deceive yourself by pretending that you have become a child again. You know without doubt that you are an adult, and this realization may cause a series of complex reactions on your part. Sometimes I thank them for their kindness; sometimes I am angry because I think that they are rude and mistreat me. I know that there will be many benefits if I continue to pretend I am a child, but I always resist that. Vulnerability is a virtue in children, but it may be a weakness, a defect, or a shameful confession to adults. This is certainly true in our culture. I do not know whether it is good or bad, but that is the way I am. And sometimes we do not understand at all our way of being. Somebody says, "Such is life."

Lost Sense of Humor

> I always had a good sense of humor. I enjoyed pleasing other people and making them happy. But now, I lost this ability to amuse others. I try to deliver a joke, but mostly what I get is somewhat embarrassed gaze from other people. My joke doesn't hit them as it is supposed to do. However, the amusement that I contribute comes from somewhere else. For example, when I first heard about "Stockwell Day," I asked one of my Canadian colleagues, "What kind of holiday is it?" Then the burst of laughs! Finally, I have succeeded in entertaining others. However, I wasn't glad at all. Ah, what a silly foreigner I became! (Zhang)

Generally speaking, humor is a form of entertainment intended to make people laugh and feel happy. But at the same time humor is a form of human communication. Hence, when we enter into another language and culture, we may experience grave loss in our ability to provoke laughter as well as to laugh. As Virginia Woolf (2004) observes, "Humor is the first of the gifts to perish in a foreign tongue."

In a notable study, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, Henry Bergson (1924) states that the comic is strictly a human phenomenon. As such, the foundation of laughter lies in human intelligence, not emotion. "This intelligence, however, must always remain in touch with other intelligences" (p. 5). We cannot appreciate laughter if we feel isolated from others, and therefore our laughter is always the laughter of a group. "However spontaneous it seems, laugher always implies a kind of secret freemasonry, or even complicity, with other laughers, real or imaginary" (p. 6). Therefore, many comic effects in one language cannot be translated into another because they refer to the customs and ideas of a particular social group.

Bergson's (1924) analysis of laughter is not perfect at all and has some shortcomings, as a matter of fact. He reduces laugher to a pure matter of intelligence and thus denies any close relation between laughter and emotion. However, his observation provides important insight into the nature of laughter: its social significance. Laughter is a special social function that binds the members of a community; when we find someone laughing with us, we may feel that he/she is one of us. In a way, the people who may realize this social aspect of laugher best are those who have experienced the loss of laughter for some reason. Some foreign students constantly smile in class; because they do not know the right moment to burst into

laughter, they feel that smiling may be enough to conceal their foreignness. But a false smile often causes a twitch in their face and wounds their pride.

In a foreign language, we lose the ability not only to laugh, but also to make others laugh. "When I make a joke in English, people usually do not get it. I have to explain why it is funny. But during this moment of interpretation and explanation, the spirit of joke becomes flat" (Zhang). Perhaps the essence of humor involves presenting something familiar to a person so that they think they know the natural culmination, then presenting a twist to what was expected or what would be the natural result of interpreting the situation in a different, less common way. In this sense foreign students' jokes may not invite laughter, although they may provoke curiosity. As well, involuntariness is an important dimension of humor. We do not laugh when someone intentionally tumbles. However, self-control in the voice of a foreign student may not make the joke amusing. Another aspect of humor is the confidence of the speaker. Often the foreign student's uncertain and awkward attitude, when they tell a joke, quells the impact of the joke on the audience.

Hoffman (1989) describes that "laughter is the lightning rod of play, the eroticism of conversation; for now, I've lost the ability to make the sparks fly" (p. 118). However, a sense of humor is not only the spice of conversation or the instrument of entertainment, but also the means of communicating with others and identifying the bonds that tie us together, in a joyful, delightful manner. Hence, for foreign students this loss of a sense of humor not only signifies a certain diminishment of recreation but also constantly reminds them of their foreignness; how difficult it is to blend themselves in this new world.

Becoming a Serious Person

> My colleagues often call me a "philosopher" with the connotations of both compliment and reproach. Why wouldn't they? Even I sense the ridiculous amount of caution in my speech and behaviors. I always arm myself with an extreme level of prudence. But why wouldn't I? Where my presence itself is a joke, why would I risk of being embarrassed more? (Cha)

> I've never been prim before, but that's how I am seen by my new peers. I don't try to tell jokes too often, I don't know the slang, I have no cool repartee. I love language too much to maul its beats, and my pride is too quick to risk the incomprehension that greets such forays. I become a very serious young person, missing the registers of wit and irony in my speech, though my mind sees ironies everywhere. (Hoffman, 1989, p. 118)

Because he does not have the luxury of being able to embellish his speech, Cha always states the gist of what is in his mind. Because he cannot afford to address the subtle and complex flow of his emotions, he always says what he is thinking. This makes his speech and actions very serious. Not only do people around him sense the seriousness, but he himself also frequently detects the graveness of his behavior and attitude.

Of course, being serious can be a virtue at times. The *Webster Online Dictionary* (2004) defines *seriousness* as "an earnest and sincere feeling." Hence being serious implies that there is a being who is earnest and sincere both to him-/herself and

to others. However, the dictionary also reveals a somewhat negative meaning of the word: "the quality of arousing fear or distress." This is the case when we say, "He learned the seriousness of his illness." Therefore we might say that seriousness can be a threat to healthy existence. It is both good and bad; it can have a positive effect, but also a negative impact on our being.

As a matter of fact, the danger of being too serious is a well-recognized phenomenon among us. In an extremely serious mode, our being can easily become overburdened, stressed out, and even unpleasant to be around. That is why we say, "Hey, relax!" when someone is continually in a serious mood. Bergson (1924) cautions:

> What life and society require of each of us is a constantly alert attention that discerns the outlines of the present situation, together with a certain elasticity of mind and body to enable us to adapt ourselves in consequence. Tension and elasticity are two forces, mutually complementary, which life brings into play. If these two forces are lacking in the body to any considerable extent, we have sickness and infirmity and accidents of every kind. If they are lacking in the mind, we find every degree of mental deficiency, every variety of insanity. Finally, if they are lacking in the character, we have cases of the gravest inadaptability to social life, which are the sources of misery and at times the causes of crime. (p. 18)

In contending with a foreign language, the being of foreign students easily falls into the state of what Bergson (1924) called *inelasticity*. Perhaps this has something to

do with the so-called "foreign student syndrome," which is characterized by vague, nonspecific physical complaints; a passive, withdrawn interaction style; and a disheveled, unkempt appearance (Furnham, 1987, p. 48). "I have lived here for seven years. What I have learned in this foreign country was, somewhat ironically, how to relax." This remark by a foreign student may win the sympathy of many foreign students.

CHAPTER 5:

LIVED EXPERIENCE OF STUDY ABROAD IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: REVISITING

Lost in Translation

I had lived in Calgary for two years until I was accepted by this university. Before starting my graduate study, I briefly visited Korea, my homeland. I met lots of friends and acquaintances. They really wanted to hear what it is like to live in another country. So I talked about my experiences of living in Canada. But soon, they lost their interest in listening to my story. Somehow I failed to deliver the story properly, although this was really remote from my intention. I used too much English. I know people don't like the person who habitually uses a foreign language only after a brief visiting. They would accuse that person of being corrupted or blame her as the person without backbone. Yet, I couldn't help it. Much of my experience cannot be translated into Korean. In a way, using English was far closer to my genuine experience. What an irony this is! (Seo)

"Reflection"—this virtually has become the most important word in my study here. In almost every class that I took, professors constantly encouraged us to reflect our past experiences and life events in order to gain some insights. So most class time was dedicated to exchange our own reflections and life stories with other classmates. But, in some ways, this critical activity has been bothersome to me. It was very difficult, if not

> impossible, for me to reflect my past experiences in English. The memory once I cherished becomes flat when I translate it into English. The meaningfulness of a certain moment does not revive its vividness during the translation. (Jinn)

The problem of translation is one of the recurring themes with regard to the phenomenon of studying abroad or learning a foreign language.[18] We certainly believe the possibility of communication even with people who speak different languages because of the translatability of language. Nevertheless, we do not want to misconstrue translation as merely a mechanical process of replacing one code with another or one's mother tongue with a foreign language. This mechanical notion of translation assumes that each and every language follows a certain universal rule, and thus, within it, the difference between languages is only a matter of how to sound a foreign one, how to utter it. However, "a person who is at home in several languages knows that one can say some things in one language that one cannot quite say in another language" (van Manen, 1997, p. xiii). What this means is that each language signifies different experiential regions that may "border each other, partially overlap, and are nested within each other" (p. xiii). There is always "a gap between the spirit of the original words and that of their reproduction" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 384), and this gap is never completely closed in translation. Hence, Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues:

---

[18] The discourse of translation covers a variety of connotations: linguistic translation, translation of self, or even cultural translation (see Asad, 1986; Jordan, 2002).

> The predominance of vowels in one language, or of consonants in another, and constructional and syntactical systems, do not represent so many arbitrary conventions for the expression of one and the same idea, but several ways for the human body to sing the world's praises and in the last resort to live it. Hence the full meaning of a language is never translatable into another. We may speak several languages, but one of them always remains the one in which we live. In order completely to assimilate a language, it would be necessary to make the world which it expresses one's own, and one never does belong to two worlds at once. (pp. 187-188)

Therefore, for foreign students, translation in its authentic sense does not happen as long as they insist on living and thinking in their mother tongue. However, this does not mean that they have to give up everything, including their mother tongue, or completely change their selves into a foreign self. Translation is not an assimilation of one language into another or an annulment of the previous self. Referring to the work of Berman, Venuti (1998) argues that "good translation is demystifying: it manifests in its own language the foreignness of the foreign text" (p. 11). An authentic translation makes a new self grow with a close companion of the old self. The following description by Hoffman (1989) speaks eloquently:

> About how much "space," physical or psychological, we need to give each other, about how much "control" is desirable, about what is private and what public, about how much interest in another person's affairs is sympathy and how much interference, about what's a pretty face or a handsome body,

> about what we're allowed to poke fun at and what we have to revere, about how much we need to hide in order to reveal ourselves. To remain outside such common agreements is to remain outside reality itself-and if I'm not to risk a mild cultural schizophrenia, I have to make a shift in the innermost ways. I have to translate myself. But if I'm to achieve this without becoming assimilated-that is, absorbed-by my new world, the translation has to be careful, the turns of the psyche unforced. To mouth foreign terms without incorporating their meanings is to risk becoming bowdlerized. A true translation proceeds by the motions of understanding and sympathy; it happens by slow increments, sentence by sentence, phrase by phrase. (pp. 210-211)

In a way, translation is a process, not a result. Perhaps foreign students are destined to be lost forever in this transition of languages and selves.

Being and Becoming

> When I first came here, I really hated it when some of my fellow Koreans uttered somewhat unfit exclamations such as, "oops" or "ouch," instead of "aiku" or "aya." How long they have been here? How could they change it so easily? Those are embodied sounds that automatically spring out in a proper situation. It is a treachery against not only our mother tongue but also our innermost self. Then, I was wrapped up by such incomprehensible aversion to those people, and I have developed an indistinct allergy to those words. However, these days, I often find out that "oops" or "ouch" sound

> frequently coming out of my mouth as if it was all mine from the beginning. How did this happen? I don't know. It just happened. (Seong)
>
> However, something happened. Suddenly I realize that I am in a more comfortable and cozy state than in the past. I am feeling much better than last year, last month and yesterday. Is it because time soothes my pain as it always does to all kinds of human sufferings? Is it because I am starting to learn how to adjust myself to being on the margin of this unfamiliar world? Or is it because I gain some familiarity with this strange world? (Cheol)

Wherever there is a change, there is a transition from one being to another or from one mode of being to another. This change into another we call *becoming*. Although we are the same person throughout life, we also change. The body grows older, values shift, and attitudes alter over time. In this sense we exist not only as we are, but also as we are becoming. Of course, there are certain qualities that seem to be the very essence of who we are, but as we move through life we encounter circumstances that challenge our notions of who we are. Living and studying in a foreign language is one of such challenges. Encountering vast amount of otherness and repositioning themselves from the familiar to the unfamiliar, foreign students are constantly pushed to question themselves: what they think, what they believe, what they love, and so on.

However, becoming is not always welcomed. Often becoming and its necessary companion, change, are condemned as a threat to one's being and identity, which is conceived as something constant, continuous, and relatively unchanging. This battle

between "being," which is impermeable and unchanging, and "becoming," which is transformational and changing, has been subjected to constant speculation by the great minds of mankind. For example, Parmenides, one of the pre-Socratic philosophers, accepted "being" as the one, changeless, eternal reality while rejecting "becoming" as an illusion of the senses. On the other hand, Heraclitus affirmed becoming on the testimony of the senses but held that being is an illusion of the intellect. Aristotle tried to synthesize these conflicting ideas of Parmenides and Heraclitus and eventually accepted both being and becoming, holding that the first concept is that of being, and it is presupposed to the idea of becoming. Aristotle defined being as the first concept of the mind and believed that this concept had objective validity and was the basic concept prior to all other concepts. He also accepted the testimony of the senses because these powers tell a person of the reality of change, or becoming. Far from the reality of becoming or change implying the denial or rejection of being, it is becoming or change that manifests being to the observing and inquiring mind. It is true that becoming or change obscures being from the mind that fails to observe becoming or change, but to the thinker attentive to the reality of becoming or change, the reality of being is laid bare and rendered intelligible.[19]

Although too briefly reviewed without details, Aristotle's synthesis affirms one of the fundamental aspects of our life: One cannot become without being, or be without becoming. This is also true in the case of foreign students. They may suffer in the transition from here to there, from their mother tongue to a foreign language. They may

---

[19] This brief summary of Aristotle and others' conception of being and becoming was made possible in the reference of an online philosophy course entitled Philosophy 101: An Introduction to Philosophy, provided by Phoenix College (2004; see http://www.pc.maricopa.edu/ss/phi101/index.htm).

resist the changes requested by the new world and the new language. However, even out of the sufferings and the resistances, the possibility arises of new being and new ways of life. In a way, foreign students recognize their potential by becoming what they never thought was likely. In the world of becoming, the future is not always a promise. Fear and anxiety are essentially immanent in the notion of future, but there is also hope and wonder: What have I become? We are going to figure out. What am I going to be? We will wait and see.

Dialectic Between Home and Abroad, Mother Tongue and Foreign Language

> I have lived here for seven years. Since I'm thirty-six now, the time that I spent here is slightly under a fifth of my young life. It's quite amount of time, really. But I had never thought this is my home, until I found out that I have to leave Edmonton for the U.S. in which I continue my post doctoral career. When I finally decided to leave, things quickly changed and a sudden sadness hit me. A vague sense of regret and sorry was all over me. It's quite different feeling from what I felt when I first left my home, but also quite similar melancholy with that experience of leaving home. I heard there is not much snow and only a short, mild winter where I'm heading. But I decided to keep my hockey stick. It does not matter that the stick may be useless there, if it is able to remind me of the time I spent here. (Hyun)[20]

---

[20] Hyun initially came from Korea and will soon go to the US for his postdoctoral career. He is 36 years old and still single. He confessed that the loneliness has made him loathe living in Edmonton. However, he now feels that he will miss even such an uneasy feeling.

> I have still problem in speaking, listening and writing in English. But one thing interesting is that now I have to use more English words to express what I feel and what I think. There are certain things that I think English words are more proper than those of my mother tongue. Not only that. I often use both Korean and English words in one sentence, even when I'm talking to a Canadian. A couple of years ago, one of the political issues in Korea was whether we should buy the American made air fighter or a Russian jet which is obviously much cheaper and more effective. The problem is our whole defense system has been constructed by the U.S. supplies. I was trying to explain this subtle situation to a Canadian colleague. During the conversation, I asked him, "do you know F-sipo?" "Huh?" "I mean do you know F-sippo?" A lot later moment, I found out that I uttered a Korean word meaning fifteen (sippo). I never committed this kind of error, when I first came here. But the more I get accustomed to English, the more often I make a mistake of such sort without being conscious. My speech and action as well as my self become hybridized. I am worrying about such contamination. (Seong)

Because we are living not only in the world of being, but also in the world of becoming, we cannot help but notice changes inside and outside us, whether we want or not. For foreign students these changes are evident when they experience the blurring of the original boundary between home and away, mother tongue and foreign language that never seemed to be possible at first. Many foreign students initially think that *here* is only a temporary place and that the foreign language is just a means of

doing their study or having a career. But life is always throwing surprises at us. The temporary place becomes homelike, although we hesitate to say it is our new home because our old home has not perished yet. We still want to attach ourselves to our old home, and yet we have an affinity and an affection for the temporary place. How can we explain it except by calling it *homelike*? *Mother tongue* means the language with which we are the most intimate and that is embodied in us. However, how can we explain this rebellion of our thoughts that refuse to be expressed in our innermost language and this treachery of our body when it emits these foreign sounds?

> Yet, language can only live on and renew itself by hybridizing shamelessly and changing its own rules as it migrates in time and space. Home for the exile and the migrant can hardly be more than a transitional or circumstantial place, since the 'original' home cannot be recaptured, nor can its presence/absence be entirely banished in the 'remade' home. Thus, figuratively but also literally speaking, traveling back and forth between home and abroad becomes a mode of dwelling. Every movement between here and there bears with it a movement within a here and movement within a there. In other words, the return is also a journey into the layer of 'future memory.' (Min-ha, 1994, pp. 14-15)

The predicament of being a foreigner in a foreign land and being a stranger in a foreign language cannot be ignored. Yet such experience, as Min-ha (1994) points out, "despite its profound sadness, can be worked through an experience of crossing boundaries and charting new ground in defiance of newly authorized or old canonical

enclosures" (p. 16). If traveling perpetuates a discontinuous state of being, if the foreign language robs the ability to protest:

> it also satisfies, despite the existential difficulties it often entails, one's insatiable need for detours and displacements in postmodern culture. The complex experience of self and other (the all-other within me and without me) is bound to forms that belong but are subject neither to 'home,' nor to 'abroad.' (p. 21)

Maybe home is "where we've never been" (Rouner, 1996) and thus signifies neither "here," nor "there." Maybe the hybridization between our mother's language and the foreign tongue is not so bad after all. Maybe where we are heading is the space of the "Third" that Min-ha (1994) talks about:

> Here, Third is not merely derivative of First and Second. It is a space of its own. Such a space allows for the emergence of new subjectivities that resist letting themselves be settled in the movement across First and Second. Third is thus formed by the process of hybridization which, rather than simply adding a here to a there, gives rise to an elsewhere-within-here/-there that appears both too recognizable and impossible to contain (pp. 18-19).

For foreign students, life becomes more enigmatic in the dialectic between home and abroad, mother's language and foreign tongue.

CHAPTER 6:

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS: THE TRAVELER'S RECORD

Pedagogy as "Seeing" the Possibility

Roughly speaking, pedagogy is a certain relationship or activity between parent and child, teacher and student, or older person and younger person. However, pedagogy does not give us a clear cognitive grasp. As van Manen (1991) explains:

> Pedagogy is now increasingly equated, arbitrarily and vaguely, with teaching, instruction, or curriculum. And pedagogy is used to refer to specific approaches or methodologies in the literature on curriculum and teaching. . . . The term pedagogy is also linked to political programs, with feminist and other philosophical movements—thus there has been an explosion of references to concepts such as *critical pedagogy, emancipatory pedagogy, deconstructionist pedagogy*, and so forth. (p. 28)

Such variety of usages of the word pedagogy in the field of education as well as in many other associated areas shows that the term itself has not been clearly defined at a conceptual level. This difficulty in conceptualization is mainly because pedagogy is essentially a practice-oriented notion. Van Manen (1991) argues that "pedagogy must be found not in abstract theoretical discourse or analytic systems, but right in the lived world" (p. 31). The meaning and significance of pedagogy does not come from a philosophical outlook or a theoretical system. Rather, it stems from the experience of its presence; that is, in a concrete, real-life situation (p. 31). Pedagogy is not just any kind of relationship or a way of doing that we arbitrarily bring into the educational scene, but something that "lets an encounter, a relationship, a situation, or an activity be

pedagogical" (p. 31). Therefore, pedagogical insight occurs mainly, not in a theoretical survey, but in a thoughtful and tactful living with children, students, or young people. In this respect phenomenological inquiry, among various research orientations, can especially be a good source of pedagogical insights, because its primary aim is to reach the actual living situation without being hampered by any hasty theoretical judgment and to understand it as it reveals itself. Of course, this phenomenological understanding may not be sufficient to be regarded as "knowledge" in terms of the traditional epistemology, because, in phenomenological inquiries, "there is no systematic argument, no sequence of propositions that we have to follow in order to arrive at a conclusion, a generalization, or a truth statement" (van Manen, 1982, p. 298). However, van Manen emphasizes:

> Phenomenological pedagogy differs from other so-called methods of inquiry in that it is not offered as a "new" epistemology or as an alternative research methodology which problematizes the topic of children and pedagogy in certain ways (e.g., cognitive functioning, information processing styles, curriculum treatment effects). Rather, the phenomenological attitude reminds us that children are already or mundanely a pedagogic concern to us prior to any epistemological choice point. Phenomenological inquiry is, therefore, not simply an "approach" (alongside other approaches) to the study of pedagogy. That is, phenomenology does not simply yield "alternative" explanations or descriptions of educational phenomena. Rather, phenomenology bids to recover reflectively the grounds which, in a deep

> sense, provide for the possibility of our pedagogic concerns with children. (p. 298)

This study as a phenomenological inquiry is also driven by pedagogical concern about the well-being of foreign students. Their lifeworld experiences have been brought into the reflective space where the difficulty, uncertainty, and ambiguity of living and studying in a foreign language can be speculated. In a way, what those experiences show us is not so promising and is filled with a great deal of frustration and utter confusion on the foreign students' part. However, our pedagogical concern does not try to find and prescribe a solution to their perceived problems; rather, what we really seek is to gain a somewhat deeper and broader understanding of their lived experiences, including their frustrations and pains. In this respect, what I present as "pedagogical implications" does not follow conventional forms, such as, "Foreign students (or their advisers) should do this or that," or "This rather than that is a more efficient way to cope with problems," and so on. Rather, it is presented as a possibility that I have witnessed from foreign students' lived experiences. Even out of frustration and despair springs a seed of hope. As van Manen (1991) suggests, pedagogy is conditioned by hope, and having hope for foreign students is much more a way of being present to them than it is a kind of doing (p. 67). Through having hope and seeing the possibility, we can gain deep pedagogical insights.

Difference as a Source of Empowering

> "Your writing is terrific and at a very high level. I like your writing style." I love these people, even though I do not thoroughly believe their

> compliments. We have been together for one and a half years for this writing workshop. These people, who are both my colleagues and friends have much experience in teaching English to ESL students. They are helping us, international students in the Department of Secondary Education, to write correctly in English. But this is not all of what they are doing. We have developed a certain relationship, a "good" relationship. They are trying to understand us. They are constantly cheering us up. They had to put up with my childlike English from the beginning and now they are encouraging me by saying that my English has been improved so much. Here is my favorite one; "This is a beautiful sentence that native speakers cannot make, because they are obsessed with a certain format or an idiomatic expression." Even though this is just flattery, how sweet it is! I can make wonderful sentences, because I am a non-native speaker and I am different from them. How wonderful discovery this is! (Cha)

When we study something in a foreign language, being different from native speakers becomes a source of pain and self-deprivation, and the fountain of one's feelings of inferiority. We experience a sort of wandering around our-selves: "Who am I really?" "Where am I now?" We cannot help but doubt the authenticity of this world in which we are living now: "This is not my world at all." We are wondering when this painful journey may end. However, as Min-ha (1994) explains:

> The voyage out of the (known) self and back into the (unknown) self sometimes takes the wanderer far away to a motley place where everything

> safe and sound seems to waver while the essence of language is placed in doubt and profoundly destabilized. Traveling can thus turn out to be a process whereby the self loses its fixed boundaries—a disturbing yet potentially empowering practice of difference. (p. 23)

Foreign students may still have many problems speaking, listening, and writing in English. They may still feel pain in having to use English as the medium of their study. They are still wandering in an ambiguous space that has been created by the unavoidable realization that they are no longer the center of this world. However, more and more, they find themselves as different beings and unique persons. They began to realize that their vulnerability does not signify inferiority. Their differences can contribute to making this world rich and diverse. What an interesting discovery that is! Is it possible to say that making this world rich and diverse is a sort of commitment toward the world? If they feel any kind of commitment to this world, does this mean that the world has already become their world, not a strange world of others?

On the Margin, We Can See More

> I always envied you because you are Canadians, because you are good at English and because you could understand much more than I do about this course, which has dealt mainly with your own situation. However, now I think that this course may have given much more lessons to me than to you. Now I know not by reading, nor by the lecture, but by living experience,

> how difficult to put oneself in another's shoes and what it means to understand the people standing on the margin. (Cha)[21]

Constantly living in between home and abroad and mother tongue and foreign language, foreign students perceive themselves as outsiders (foreigners, strangers, etc.) and define themselves as standing on the margin or the border of their host country and its culture. As usual, marginality is associated with loss, deprivation, or even oppression. It is the space of exclusion and alienation. However, margin not only refers to this pathetic state of existence, but also signifies a certain possibility of crossing, expansion, and overcoming.

"Colonized and marginalized people are socialized to always see more than their own points of view" (Min-ha, 1994, p. 16). Thus, we can see more on the margin, although this "seeing" does not always come with a clear vision. It is ambiguous and blurred and has a wide range of meanings, and thus what we see on the margin does not always turn out to be a lesson. It needs to be articulated and claimed. In this sense Roth and Harama (2000) talk about the need for "border pedagogies," which emphasize that those who are designated and marked as 'other' need to re/claim and re/construct lives, work, voices, histories, and visions" (p. 759).

Perhaps one example of such border pedagogies is Gendlin's (1997) notion of "crossing." First, he explains what "crossing" means with language, and then he applies the notion to a marginalized person who is caught between two cultures:

---

[21] This is a part of a speech that Cha addressed in the last class of a course. The main goal of the course was to gain a better, authentic understanding of the weak, the marginalized, and women.

> Language involves how words and situations cross: The word brings its many meanings (its use-situations) which are implicit in our knowing how to use the word. The present situation has its intricacy. In this situation this old word might disclose a new and sophisticated meaning, changing this situation in a subtle way that has more new features than one could have listed in advance either for the situation or the word. We see that crossing opens the "is" and-discloses-features that were not there before. (pp. 249-250)

This notion of crossing can be applied to a marginalized person,

> a person who has lived in two cultures, and is now "marginal" to both. The person cannot help but understand each culture better and more perceptively than people who have lived only in one place, because the situations of both cultures have crossed in the persons' experiential mesh. Then each new situation crosses with all those. Many new, more precise meanings and perceptions arise, which did not exist in either culture. . . . Marginality confers deeper perceptions, as we know from common observation. (p. 250)

Hence crossing occurs when we celebrate the difference and understand otherness in others. If there are no contradictory meanings, there will be no crossing but, rather, assimilation. According to Gendlin (1997):

> The more different people we have known, the more easily we understand the next new person, although that one is again different. That is because

> understanding does not depend on a common content. Rather, the new thing crosses with our implicit experiential mesh. That is what makes us say, "Oh, . . . I see." (p. 250)

On the margin we mourn. However, in the midst of mourning and suffering we may see hope. Perhaps the starting point is to articulate that mourning and give a voice to that suffering. In a way, this study can be an example of such articulation and giving a voice. Of course, the concept of border pedagogy has been developed and associated mainly with somewhat large-scale political consciousness around the notion of "resistance" (Giroux, 1992; Roth & Harama, 2000). However, the possibility of crossing, expanding, and overcoming, at which border pedagogy is precisely aimed, does not lie in only that kind of political rhetoric. Even political action should come from a genuine and thoughtful understanding of life on the border if it is to be truly effective and successful. Again, giving voice does not always need to be conceived as aggressive and combatant; often it comes in the form of an authentic confession or an honest story telling.

Enriching the World in Which We Live

> An expert of Buddhism, who teaches in Japan, once visited our department. (Interestingly, he is not an Asian but a Westerner!) He gave a lecture about the basic Buddhist tenets. Although I am not a Buddhist, I had no problem following the lecture, because Buddhism is one important foundation of our way of living. But many of my Canadian colleagues had a really difficult time catching up with that lecture. Even some of them approached me after

> the lecture, and asked to give some supplementary explanation. At that time, I was really glad, because finally I had something to give. Since I wasn't born here, and English is not my language, somehow I have to depend much on others, especially Canadian colleagues. I have had a somewhat indebted feeling toward them. But now I know I also have a strong point, something that I can contribute to, because they were not born there and they can't speak my language. (Guo)

Guo talks about the moment when he feels for the first time that he can contribute to the academic community as much as his Canadian colleagues do. Language deficiency has made him regard his work as somehow inferior to that of others. However, now he knows that the best contribution that he can make does not come from assimilating himself with the way others do things, but from keeping his difference and sublimating it.

In interpreting Humbolt's idea that language is a worldview, Gadamer (1989) discusses the relationship between human beings and the world in which they live. According to him, "Language is not just one of man's possessions in the world; rather, on it depends the fact that man has a world at all" (p. 443). Human beings have a unique and original relation to the world that cannot be found in the animal kingdom. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that the human world is verbal in nature. Gadamer adds:

> Language has no independent life apart from the world that comes to language within it. Not only is the world world only insofar as it comes into

> language, but language, too, has its real being only in the fact that the world is presented in it. (p. 443)

Thus, the human world is different from the concept of environment, in that the latter is not only for humans, but also for all kinds of living creatures. Rather, the uniqueness of "man's relationship to the world is characterized by *freedom from environment* " (p. 444). The freedom of human beings in relation to the environment makes it possible for them to have a multiplicity of diverse languages. Because humans can always rise above the particular environment in which they happen to find themselves and because their speech brings the world into language, humans are, from the beginning, free for variety in exercising their capacity for language (p. 444). Therefore, human language is variable in the sense that there are foreign languages that one can learn, as well as in itself, for it contains various possibilities for saying the same thing (p. 445).

For human beings, such variety and multiplicity of language is neither a disaster nor a barrier, as the myth of Babel told. Rather, it indicates the possibility of enlarging and deepening our insight. Gadamer (1989) explains:

> It is true that those who are brought up in a particular linguistic and cultural tradition see the world in a different way from those who belong to other traditions. It is true that the historical "worlds" that succeed one another in the course of history are different from one another and from the world of today; but in whatever tradition we consider it, it is always a human—i.e., verbally constituted—world that presents itself to us. As verbally constituted,

> every such world is of itself always open to every possible insight and hence to every expansion of its own world picture, and is accordingly available to others. (p. 447)

Therefore, Humbolt's idea that every language is a worldview does not mean that those views of the world are relative to one another or the result of the relativization of the "world." Rather, what the world is is not different from the views in which it presents itself (p. 447). The fact is that our experience of the world is bound to language, and thus does not imply an exclusiveness of perspectives. By entering foreign language-worlds, we do not leave and negate our own world; by learning foreign languages, we do not alter our relationship to the world. Instead, while preserving our own relationship to the world, we extend and enrich it in the world of the foreign language (p. 453).

Making a Reflective Space: Writing

> Since speaking and listening require more quickness in response, I cannot help but put more weight to reading and writing. Especially, writing gives me a chance to express who I am and what I am thinking. Of course, it was really clumsy at first. I had to frequently look up the words in the dictionary. But dictionaries always fall short of letting know what's the proper context that I can use the word. Anyway, as time went by, writing started paying me off. Colleagues and professors' understanding of who I am began to grow through my writing. However, their recognition is not the only reward. I began to know better about myself and to understand more about my

> situation. I don't remember when exactly it happened. But, now, I no longer look up the words from the dictionaries. (Cha)

Gadamer (1989) emphasizes that "language has its true being only in dialogue, and thus language is by nature the language of conversation" (p. 446). Of course, we must not misconstrue this remark as if it reveals only the primacy and supremacy of speech among different modes of language such as reading and writing. Gadamer also states:

> Certainly, in relation to language, writing seems a secondary phenomenon. The sign language of writing refers to the actual language of speech. But that language is capable of being written is by no means incidental to its nature. Rather, this capacity for being written down is based on the fact that speech itself shares in the pure ideality of the meaning that communicates itself in it. In writing, the meaning of what is spoken exists purely for itself and communication. (p. 392)

As a matter of fact, writing and speech are in the same plight. "Just as in speech there is an art of appearances and a corresponding art of true thought—sophistry and dialectic—so in writing there are two arts, one serving sophistic, the other dialectic" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 393). However, there are also experiential differences between speaking and writing. Van Manen (2002) believes that "in face-to-face situations speaking and hearing are more likely conversationally and relationally intertwined. The speaker speaks in a listening way and the listener listens in a speaking manner" (p. 246).

Hence, whereas "speaking has a certain quality of immediacy" (p. 247), the aura of writing comes from reflection.

Slightly disadvantaged in face-to-face conversation, foreign students sometimes take refuge in writing. Writing gives them a chance to address who they are and what they are thinking, which is difficult in speaking. Of course, writing is itself a strenuous task, especially in a foreign language. However, in writing one can gain more control of what one wants to say and how to say it. Van Manen (2002) explains:

> This temporal-spatial immediacy also means that the speaker cannot erase what has been said. One cannot restart a conversation in the way that one can restart a written text. One cannot edit out a phrase and replace it with a more appropriate one. One cannot step back reflectively from one's spoken word to monitor and adjust the effects that selected words and phrases seem to exercise on other words we utter. (p. 237)

Thus, even in a foreign language, many foreign students find not only more room to address what they have in mind, but also a closer and more accurate version of their stories.

Another important aspect of writing is that it opens up a reflective space where we can know ourselves better and understand our world more. In a normal situation of speaking, the words we utter are not always thought laden. We frequently say something that we do not really mean or even miss what we want to say in the rapid current of verbal exchanges. However, when we enter the space of writing, our being suddenly changes its modes into a more thoughtful and considerate state of existence.

In writing, we try to tell and retell what we actually mean without being interrupted by conversational partners as in speaking. Hence it may require much more time, but why do we have to be bothered by time when we write something? Of course, there are some sorts of writings that require urgency. A news reporter may be in a hurry to write to meet a deadline. However, the essential part of writing is taking time. In time taking, we step back and think again.

Thus, the reflective space of writing gives foreign students an opportunity to think over where they are now in close relation to where they were in the past, as well as who they are now and who they were then. As van Manen (2002) notes, "A peculiar change takes place in the person who starts to write and enters the text: the self retreats or steps back as it were, without completely stepping out of its social, historical, biographic being" (p. 3). Therefore, writing, for foreign students, becomes the space where the meanings of home and abroad, now and then, and I and not-I are speculated, intermingled, assembled into innumerous configurations, and thus ordered and made sense of again. This may be why many people in diaspora are attracted to writing and why they write mainly autobiographical works (e.g., Ariel Dorfman's [1998] *Heading South, Looking North*; Eva Hoffman's [1989] *Lost in Translation*).

> Living in a double exile—far from the native land and far from their mother tongue—they are thought to write by memory and to depend to a large extent on hearsay. Directing their look toward a long bygone reality, they supposedly excel in reanimating the ashes of childhood and of the country of origin. The autobiography can thus be said to be an abode in which the writers mentioned necessarily take refuge (Min-ha, 1994, p. 10).

Writing also provides an opportunity to gain a new and deeper awareness of language itself. Van Manen (2002) points out:

> More so than in the speaking, expressing, and communicating in conversational situations, the language of scripture foregrounds the resistance of language. In trying to write one becomes acutely aware of the nature of language. The experience of resistance and difficulty of language are not accidental features of writing but they belong to language itself that continually puts to question the nature and possibilities of words. In writing one develops a special relation to language which disturbs its taken-for-grantedness. (p. 247)

While trying to write something, foreign students may confront the fundamental limitation of language, whether it is their mother tongue or a foreign language. Or they may find a new possibility of language; for some learners, the foreign language even offers a new freedom of expression that was not available in the mother tongue (Bates, 1999, p. 7). The taken-for-granted dichotomy between mother tongue and foreign language may be blurred in a new discovery of the dialectic between the two. Hence Min-ha (1994) suggests, "In writing, writers open to research the space of language rather than reduce language to a mere instrument in the service of reason or feelings" (p. 16).

In the unbeatable bid of language, some foreign students fall into the darkness of writing only to discover the light—the light that may allow a glimpse of who they

are, where they are, and why they are. Thus language delivers its claim and its ultimatum to them: "I am you, and you are me."

CHAPTER 7:

CONCLUSION: SETTING OFF ON A NEW TRAVEL

This dissertation has followed the structure of a travel itinerary. The question that provided the momentum for the journey is, "What is it like to live and study in a foreign language?" The lived experience of foreign students was both the starting point and the final destination of this intellectual journey. The spatial, temporal, corporeal, and relational meanings were the milestones that this travel was supposed to reach. However, just as real travel has, this study also has its own tumbles and stumbles, and there may be many notable sites that I left out and many grand sights that I could not see.

When we return home from a journey, we may want to rethink our impressions and experiences from the journey. For example, after finishing a trip we may say, "It was wonderful" or "That was not so bad" or "I would never go there again," aided by notes written, photographs taken, souvenirs bought, and video clips filmed during the travel. This reflective activity would connect many fragmented impressions and memories to one another and thus form a certain amount of meaningful information, knowledge, and insights of the place itself, its inhabitants, its customs, and its historical remnants. Based on such post-travel reflection, we may plan another visit to the place or to a completely different site. We can help out other people who are also interested in visiting that place. Likewise, although it is somewhat different from the conventional sense of the word *conclusion*, what I would like to do in this last chapter is to offer my *reflections* on the whole process of journey and to explain what this journey has been

like for me. In a way, this is my personal version of how I have experienced the study and research in a foreign language.

Personal Reminiscence of the Travel

Travel provides the traveler with many personal memories and recollections. These reminiscences of travel can be presented around the difficulties and the pleasures that we may encounter during the journey. Through this study I have also faced many obstacles. There was the difficulty of obtaining detailed and concrete experiential descriptions. This difficulty led to my initial disappointment expressed in Ch 2 regarding the quality of the interviews and conversations with many foreign students. On the one hand, these feelings of disappointment may have arisen from my excessive passion to show special and exceptional things through the text, although the point of this research is not to claim exotic findings but rather to look and care for the extraordinary in the ordinary dimensions of our experiential reality. On the other hand, such difficulty is the most common barrier that all human science researchers have to face and overcome. We cannot directly access the primordial experience of a living moment. As van Manen (1997) says, "Our consciousness itself cannot be described directly, although it is the only access we have to the world" (p. 9). Similarly, the world itself, without reference to an experiencing person or consciousness, cannot be described directly either. Therefore, "in cases when consciousness itself is the object of consciousness (when I reflect on my own thinking process) then consciousness is not the same as the act in which it appears" (p. 10). Thus, once we begin to reflect on the experience that we undergo, it may lose its living quality and turn into something else. Besides, our reflection of a lived experience cannot be carried out without language;

but, ultimately, words miss the fullness and the uniqueness of the lived moment. Hence, too often the lived experience is blurred or embellished or dramatized in the presence of language. The main concern of this study is the experience of a foreign language (English); this may add another difficulty because, in addition to the fact that language itself includes a certain distance from the lived experience, the foreign context of such experience tends to increase the difficulties of accessing and describing the lived moment. In a way, the topic of this dissertation is destined to overcome this doubled distance from the context of lived moment.

Second, there was the difficulty of reflecting and theorizing. The purpose of hermeneutic phenomenology is to gain insights through unmediated reflection on our prereflective and primordial experiences. Therefore, every phenomenological research becomes unique, one of a kind. Merleau-Ponty (1962) remarks, "[The phenomenologist] is a perpetual beginner, which means that he takes for granted nothing that men, learned or otherwise, believe they know" (p. xiv). In a way, I am a beginner in the perfect sense of the word, regarding both the topic and the methodology of this dissertation. I had never studied language, or even seriously thought about it, before I began this project. Moreover, I always thought that there was little possibility of using phenomenology as a research methodology, especially in our educational field, because of its philosophical heaviness. However, academic contribution is also another important goal of phenomenological research. Every research should produce a theory. Avoiding the interference of previously established theories is one thing; organizing insights and incorporating them into a new theory (in other words, "theorizing") is a quite different story. Research had not been that difficult before I engaged in a

phenomenological study; all I had to do was to find some great thinkers who, I hoped, would have a great deal of commonality to compare or disparity to contrast. Relying on great thinkers and their ideas reduces time and effort, but at the same time becomes a safe way to present one's research to the public. However, by conducting a phenomenological research and by giving up a dependence on the so-called "experts" or the "refined theories," I had to take the entire responsibility for my study, for my theorizing. By myself, all alone. As a beginner, I always doubt the quality of my reflection and the righteousness of my insights; the pressure is too much. But at the same time I sense a crudeness and clumsiness in my "theorizing."

Third, there was the difficulty of reading and writing. I have read quite a number of books, but it was always a difficult task weaving them together and incorporating their insights into my study. Too many things flow in my mind, but I always come up with a few lines in writing. Three-hundred-something pages of others' dissertations made me frustrated. Could I lengthen my dissertation if I used my mother tongue? Possibly. But I well know that this is just a vain thought. The blame should be laid on the shortage of my insights and the insufficiency of my thinking, not in the foreign language. However, I still wonder; If I were in my mother tongue, could I think better?

Of course, researching and writing a dissertation in a foreign language have their own rewards. There is a certain joy and pride in the moment when I can finally understand the shades and connotations of once-alien cultural sensitivities and of the vernaculars of the foreign language. Working with a phenomenology definitely nurtures a sensitivity and an attentiveness in me. The way that I see things and people

now is quite different from that of the past. But the biggest reward comes from the reflection on my-self and others that I carried on through this study. As a foreign student myself, all the stories that I collected in this paper have literally become my stories. The suffering, mourning, embarrassment, and alienation, and the glory, pride, and achievement of foreign students are all mine; that is what I actually lived through. In a way, this dissertation is an autobiography, a report of myself.

Setting Off on a New Travel

Even during the travel we tend to see things in a way that fits in with our life interests. For example, there may be a big difference between what a paleontologist wants to see and what an architect tends to look at. Likewise, this intellectual journey was driven by and made up of my life interest: a pedagogical concern. There are many small and fragmented insights that need to be gathered and organized. The followings are some of the examples:

First, foreign students need to have various assistance programs for them to become successful not only in their field of study, but also in their everyday living. Many universities already furnish multifarious programs and run some sort of international centers for foreign students. However, many of them focus only on administrative convenience or academic achievement. They need to devote more attention to the problem of everyday coping for foreign students.

Second, these assistance programs should be based on respect for the difference, not on acceleration of assimilation. If the focus is on the latter, foreign students may

lose their strong point of contribution in the context of both their host country and their homeland.

Third, if these programs are organized at the department level, not at the university level, they may be easier for foreign students to access. Many universities offer, for example, a writing assistance program, but sometimes it is not of much use to foreign students. Each department or faculty requires a different writing and presentation style, whereas foreign students need more specific help than just general guidance. Personally, I received a great deal of help from a writing workshop that was held in my department. Because we have many things in common (for example, a pedagogical concern, terminology, and thinking style), the workshop was quite successful in a more tangible way.

Fourth, there need to be more opportunities for foreign students to present what they study and research. Although most professors provide an equal opportunity to both domestic and foreign students, often equal opportunity means only to allow exactly the same amount of time. A more tactful approach is required. For example, it would be preferable for professors to ask foreign students to present their opinions early in the discussion, because it is very difficult for them to interject during the discussion.

Perhaps the reader will say, "Now it is about time for you to tell how to solve this problem. What solutions can you offer that will solve the problems encountered by foreign students and the people who are preparing for studying abroad in a near future?" However, problems and solutions belong to a different kind of epistemology. From the perspective of phenomenological inquiry the phenomena that have been explored here need to be understood for the meanings that inhere in them. The

lifeworlds of foreign students are not problems to be solved once and for all (life is not like that!) but predicaments to be interpreted and understood in and through our actions. So what this study is trying to achieve is not to come up with solutions whatever they may be, but to expound and reveal some of the meaningful aspects of the experience so that we can understand them in their contextual particularities. The pedagogical competence that we seek as educators does not come from solutions; but from our efforts of understanding, no matter how incomplete they may be. Therefore, instead of offering a series of "should do," my closing suggestion to the reader is to reflect on the following poem:

I want to travel,
To see new places,
To enjoy myself,
To go here and there,
To tell my friends
How many counties I know.
But I don't want to learn,
I don't want the work
Of learning new languages,
To communicate with people.
What I really want is to travel.
And when I come back
My friends will ask me
How was my trip,
I will answer "wonderful!"
I saw churches and museums
That I don't know the names of,
I had a drink with someone

Whom I couldn't speak with,
I had a guide book
Which I couldn't read.
So I stayed in the hotel
Wondering how wonderful it is
To be abroad.

("To Travel," E. Harris; as cited in Bates, 1999, p. 21)

Living and studying in a foreign land is a difficult thing. However, this does not mean that it is not worthwhile to do. Certainly studying in a foreign land and language has its merits. In order to enjoy the benefits, foreign students should learn the language of their host country with all their hearts and souls. Learning a foreign language is not only for equipping new means or tools of their studies; but it is itself a significant study of the new world that they are confronting now. Foreign students themselves should strive for positive attitudes and try to become involved in academic affairs as well as in everyday gatherings, chatting, and even sharing meals with others. Studying is not just a part of their lives, but also the life that they are now living. Foreign students should find and build a reflecting space, where their difficulties, agonies and confusions can be brought, whether it is in writing or in the companies that they may keep. For many foreign students, learning about themselves can be more valuable lesson in their lives than learning about their subject matters.

Like most human experience, the experience of living and studying in a foreign language is characterized by complexities and ambiguities. We cannot address them all even with our most conscious efforts and most refined language. I have to acknowledge

that my research has touched only a small portion of the experiential world and reached just a few layers that veil the surface; it is obvious that we need more oriented and devoted study in this area.

I cannot be so confident to say, "My study here is done." Perhaps it is a bit of a cliché to say that this kind of study has no endpoint and thus is a never-ending process. But I must acknowledge that my study is incomplete; yet, I must now "wrap it up." I am also a foreigner, and my eyes are definitely set there, not here (or elsewhere?). The fatigue of living and studying in a foreign country is becoming too great. Or perhaps what I really desire is to travel once again, to expand once more. The five years that I have spent in Canada is far from a short or forgettable period of time; it has worn away the eccentricity of the stranger from me. "When you no longer feel like a stranger, then there will be no problem in becoming a stranger again" (Min-ha, 1994, p. 13). Hence wrapping up or concluding does not mean putting a period at the end of this study/journey. It means having the courage to become a stranger again and a desire to launch another journey. Where I am heading? That is something that I now have to figure out!

REFERENCES

Amoore, L., & Langley, P. (2001). Experiencing globalization: Active teaching and learning in international political economy. *International Studies Perspectives, 2*(1),15-23.

Aoki, T. (1991). The dialectic of mother language and second language: A curriculum exploration. *Inspiriting Curriculum and Pedagogy: Talks to Teachers* (pp. 23-28). Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta, Department of Secondary Education.

Appiah-Padi, S. K. (1999). Study abroad and global citizenship: Sub-Saharan African students at the University of Alberta. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Apple, M. W. (1975). Scientific interests and the nature of educational institutions. In W. Pinar (Ed.), *Curriculum theorizing: The reconceptualists*. Berkeley, CA: McCurthan.

Arias, E. C. (1999). *Survey of international students at the University of Alberta.* Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Arnold, P. J. (1979). *Meaning in movement, sport, and physical education*. London, UK: Heinemann.

Asad, T. (1986). The concept of cultural translation in British social anthropology. In J. Clifford & G. E. Marcus (Eds.), *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography* (pp. 141-164). Berkeley: California University Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays* (V. W. Mcgee, Trans.; C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Eds.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bates, M. (Ed.). (1999). *Poetry as a foreign language: EFL poetry anthology*. East Lothian, UK: White Adder Press.

Bergson, H. (1924). *Laughter: An essay on the meaning of the comic* (C. Brereton & F. Rothwell, Trans.). New York: Macmillan.

Buckley, F. (1971). An approach to a phenomenology of at-homeness. In A. Giorgi, W. Fischer, & R. von Eckartsberg (Eds.), *Dusquesne studies in phenomenological psychology: Volume I* (pp. 198-211). Pittsburgh: Dusquesne University Press.

Buttimer, A. (1980). Home, reach, and the sense of place. In A. Buttimer & D. Seamon (Eds.), *The human experience of space and place* (pp. 166-187). New York: St. Martin's Press.

Cassell Dictionary of Word Histories. (1999). London, UK: Cassell.

Council on International Educational Exchange. (1988). *Educating for global competence: The report of the Advisory Council for International Educational Exchange*. New York: Author.

Derrida, J. (1998). *Monolingualism of the other; or, The prosthesis of origin* (P. Mensah, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Dorfman, A. (1998). *Heading south, looking north: A bilingual journey*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Dunnett, S. C. (Ed.). (1981). *Factors affecting the adaptation of foreign students in cross cultural settings*. New York: State University of New York at Buffalo.

Edie, J. M. (1976). *Speaking and meaning: The phenomenology of language*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Fiumara, G. C. (1990). *The other side of language: A philosophy of listening*. New York: Routledge.

Furnham, A. (1987). The adjustment of sojourners. In Y. Y. Kim & W. B. Gudykunst (Eds.), *Cross-cultural adaptation: Current approaches* (pp. 42-61). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Gadamer, H. G. (1989). *Truth and method* (2nd rev. ed.; Joel Weinsheimer & Donald G. Marshall, eds.). New York: Crossroad.

Gendlin, E. T. (1997). Reply to Hatab. In D. M. Levin (Ed.), *Language beyond postmodernism: Saying and thinking in Gendlin's philosophy* (pp. 246-251). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Giroux, H. (1992). *Border crossing: Cultural workers and the politics of education.* New York: Routledge.

Greene, M. (1975). Curriculum and consciousness. In W. Pinar (Ed.), *Curriculum theorizing: The reconceptualists* (pp. 299-317). Berkeley, CA: McCurthan.

Gregory, W. T. (2004). *Heidegger on traditional language and technological language.* Retrieved May 3, 2004, from http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cont/ContGreg.htm

Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). New York: Harper & Row.

Heidegger, M. (1971). *Poetry, language, thought* (A. Hofstadter, Trans.). New York: Harper & Row.

Heidegger, M. (1977a). *Basic writings from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*. (1st ed.). (D. F. Krell, Ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

Heidegger, M. (1977b). *The question concerning technology, and other essays* (1st ed.). (W. Lovit, Trans.). New York: Harper & Row.

Heidegger, M. (1982). *On the way to language* (P. D. Hertz, Trans.). New York: Harper & Row.

Heidegger, M. (1994). *Basic questions in philosophy* (R. Rojcewicz & A. Schuwer, Trans.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hoffman, E. (1989). *Lost in translation: A life in a new language*. New York: E. P. Dutton.

Igoa, C. (1995). *The inner world of the immigrant child*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Ihde, D. (1999). *Expanding hermeneutics: Visualism in science*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Jager, B. (1975). Theorizing, journeying, dwelling. In A. Giorgi, C. Fischer, & E. L. Murray (Eds.), *Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology: Volume II* (pp. 235-260). Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Johnston, I. (1996). *Re-mapping literary worlds: Postcolonial pedagogy in practice*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Jordan, S. A. (2002). Ethnographic encounters: The processes of cultural translation. *Language and Intercultural Communication, 2*(2), 96-110.

Kauffmann, N. L., Martin, J. N., & Weaver, H. D. (1992). *Students abroad, strangers at home: Education for a global society*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Kent, T. (1991). Hermeneutics and genre. In D. Hilley, J. Bohman, & R. Shusterman (Eds.), *The interpretive turn: Philosophy, science, culture* (pp. 282-303). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kim, Y. Y., & Gudykunst, W. B. (Eds.). (1987). *Cross-cultural adaptation: Current approaches*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Kinnell, M. (Ed.). (1990). *The learning experiences of overseas students*. Bristol, UK: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.

Kirova-Petrova, A. (1996). *Exploring children's loneliness feelings*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Klineberg, O., & Hull, W. F., IV. (1979). *At a foreign university: An international study of adaptation and coping*. New York: Praeger.

Kockelmans, J. J. (1986). Phenomenological conceptions of the life-world. In A.-T. Tymieniecka (Ed.), *Analecta Husserliana* (Vol. 20; pp. 339-355). Dordrecht, Neth.: D. Reidel.

Kockelmans, J. J. (Ed.). (1972). *On Heidegger and language*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Kohonen, V., Jaatinen, R., Kaikkonen, P., & Lehtovaara, J. (2001). *Experiential learning in foreign language education*. New York: Pearson Education.

Kristeva, J. (1991). *Strangers to ourselves* (L. S. Roudiez, Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Kwant, R. C. (1965) *Phenomenology of language*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Laubscher, M. R. (1994). *Encounters with difference: Student perception of the role of out-of-class experiences in education abroad*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Levin, D. M. (Ed.). (1997). *Language beyond postmodernism: Saying and thinking in Gendlin's philosophy*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Light, A., & Smith, J. M. (Eds.). (1998). *Philosophies of place*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Luhmann, N. (1997). Globalization or world society: How to conceive of modern society? *International Review of Sociology, 7*(1), 67-80.

McCormick, P. (1976). *Heidegger and the language of the world*. Ottawa, ON: University of Ottawa Press.

McNamara, D., & Harris, R. (Eds.). (1997). *Overseas students in higher education: Issues in teaching and learning*. New York: Routledge.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception*. (C. Smith, Trans.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964). *Signs* (R. C. McCleary, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1973a). *Consciousness and the acquisition of language* (H. J. Silverman, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1973b). *Prose of the world* (C. Lefort, Ed.; J. O'Neil, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1974). *Phenomenology, language and sociology: Selected essays of Maurice Merleau-Ponty* (J. O'Neil, Ed.). London, UK: Heinemann.

Minn-ha, T. (1994). Other than myself/my other self. In G. Robertson, M. Mash, L. Tickner, J. Bird, B. Curtis, & T. Putnam (Eds.), *Traveller's tales: Narratives of home and displacement* (pp. 9-26). London: Routledge.

Moran, D. (2000). *Introduction To phenomenology*. New York: Routledge.

Northey, D. R. (1985). *A human science investigation of the pedagogic nature of an exchange experience*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Ogulnick, K. (Ed.). (2000). *Language crossings: Negotiating the self in a multicultural world*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Phoenix College. (2004). *Philosophy 101: An introduction to philosophy*. Retrieved May 3, 2004, from www.pc.maricopa.edu/ss/phi101

Platt, K. (1996). Places of experience and the experience of place. In L. Rouner (Ed.), *The longing for home* (pp. 112-127). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Relph, E. (1976). *Place and placelessness*. London: Pion.

Rewers, E. (1999). *Language and space: The poststructuralist turn in the philosophy of culture*. New York: Peter Lang.

Robertson, G., Mash, M., Tickner, L., Bird, J., Curtis, B., & Putnam, T. (Eds.) (1994). *Traveller's Tales: Narratives of Home and Displacement*. London: Routledge.

Rodriguez, R. (1982). *Hunger of memory: The education of Richard Rodriguez*. Boston: David R. Godine.

Roth, W., & Harama H. (2000). (Standard) English as second language: Tribulations of self. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 32*(6), 757-775.

Rouner, L. S. (1996). (Ed.). *The longing for home*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Rouner, L. S. (1996). Home is where we've never been: Experience and transcendence. In L. S. Rouner (Ed.), *The longing for home* (pp. 81-94). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Ryckmans, P. (1996). *The view from the bridge: Aspects of culture*. Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Said, E. (1990). Reflections on exile. In R. Ferguson et al. (Eds.), *Out there: Marginalization and contemporary culture* (pp. 173-186). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Sarup, M. (1994). Home and identity. In G. Robertson, M. Mash, L. Tickner, J. Bird, B. Curtis, & T. Putnam. (Eds.), *Traveller's tales: Narratives of home and displacement* (pp. 93-104). London: Routledge.

Saunders, R. (Ed.). (2003). *The concept of the foreign: An interdisciplinary dialogue.* New York: Lexington Books.

Schutz, A. (1967). The life-world. In M. Natanson (Ed.), *Collected Papers III* . The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Seamon, D., & Mugerauer, R. (Eds.) (1985). *Dwelling, Place and environment*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Segars, J., & Bennett, W. F. (Eds.). (1986). *Looking forward/looking backward: The cultural readaptation of international students*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University, International Center for Arid and Semi-Arid Land Studies.

Sheh, S. (1994). *Adjustment of Hong Kong students at the University of Alberta.* Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Si-sa Elite English-Korean Dictionary. (1994). Seoul: Si-sa-young-o-sa.

Smith, D. I., & Carvill, B. (2000). *The gift of the stranger*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans.

Sokolowski, R. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Standish, P. (1992). *Beyond the self: Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and the limits of language*. Brookfield, VT: Avebury.

Stelter, R. (2000). The transformation of body experience into language. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 31*(1), 63-77.

Stewart, J. (1995). *Language as articulate contact: Toward a post-semiotic philosophy of communication*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Suvantola, J. (2002). *Tourist's experience of place*. Hampshire, UK: Ashgate.

Tauber, A. I. (1996). Home and Zakhor—Remember! In L. Rouner (Ed.), *The longing for home* (pp. 148-169). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Tilley, C. (1994). *A phenomenology of landscape*. Providence, RI: Berg.

Van der Merwe, W. L. (1996). Language, lifeworld, and (inter)subjectivity. In A.-T. Tymieniecka (Ed.), *Analecta Husserliana: Life in the glory of its radiating manifestations: 25th Anniversary publication book* (Vol. 48; pp. 349-366). Boston: Kluwer Academic.

Van Manen, M. (1981). Pedagogical theorizing. *Re-thinking education: Modes of enquiry in the human sciences* (pp. 22-35). Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta, Department of Secondary Education.

Van Manen, M. (1982). Phenomenological pedagogy. *Curriculum Inquiry, 12*(3), 283-299.

Van Manen, M. (1984). Practicing phenomenological writing. *Phenomenology and Pedagogy, 2*(1), 36-69.

Van Manen, M. (1991). *The tact of teaching: The meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness*. London, ON: Althouse Press.

Van Manen, M. (1997a). From meaning to method. *Qualitative Health Research, 7*(3), 345-369.

Van Manen, M. (1997b). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London, ON: Althouse Press.

Van Manen, M. (2001a). *Phenomenology online*. Retrieved May 3, 2004, from http://www.phenomenologyonline.com

Van Manen, M. (2001b). Professional practice and 'doing phenomenology.' In S. K. Toombs (Ed.), *Handbook of phenomenology and medicine (Philosophy and Medicine Series)* (pp. 457-474). Dordrecht, Neth.: Kluwer Press.

Van Manen, M. (2002). *Writing in the dark: Phenomenological studies in interpretive inquiry*. London, ON: Althouse Press.

Van Manen, M. (2003). Lived experience. In M. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman, & T. F. Liao (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of social science research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Venuti, L. (1998). *The scandals of translation*. New York: Routledge.

Vygotzky, L. (1962). *Thoughts and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wagner, K., & Magistrale, T. (1995). *Writing across culture: An introduction to study abroad and the writing process*. New York: Peter Lang.

Walsh, B. J. (1988). Homemaking in exile: Homelessness, postmodernity, and theological reflection. In D. Blomberg & I. Lambert (Eds.), *Reminding: Renewing the mind in learning* (pp. 1-21). Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity.

Webster Online Dictionary. (2004). *Seriousness*. Retrieved May 3, 2004, from http://webster-dictionary.org

Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus. (2002). New Lanark, Scotland: Geddes & Grosset.

Williams, G. (1986). *Overseas students and their place of study: Report of a survey*. London, ON: Overseas Students Trust.

Winning, A. (1991). *The language of home and the home of language: Pedagogical considerations for ESL practice*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Woolf, V. (2004). *Virginia Woolf quotes*. Retrieved May 3, 2004, from http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Arc/4941/qxwoolf.html

Zhou, W. (2004). *The experience of being a foreigner*. Retrieved May 3, 2004, from http://www.phenomenologyonline.com